NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

VOL. III

Z. T. SWEENEY

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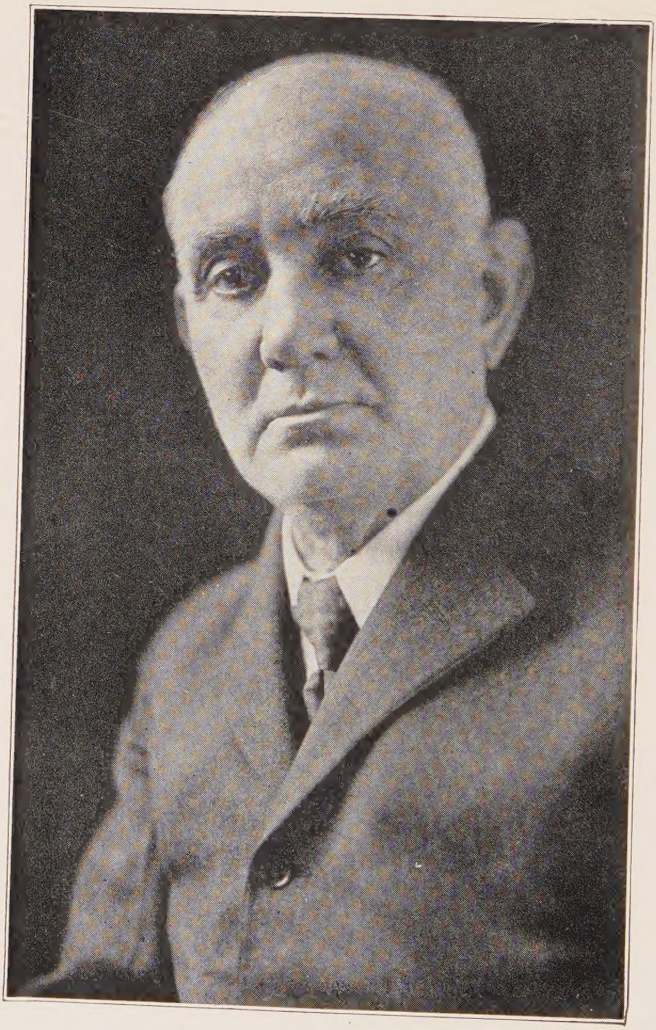

J. T. Sweeney

Born February 10, 1849
Died February 4, 1926

NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

VOL. III

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To Joseph I. Sweeney, son of Mr. and Mrs. Z. T. Sweeney, who was taken out of this world just as he was preparing to enter the ministry of the gospel, this book is lovingly dedicated.

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FOREWORD

WE TAKE pleasure in presenting the third volume of our *New Testament Christianity,* which, like the first and second volumes, is published for gratuitous distribution among the ministers of the Christian church.

The contents are made up largely of sermons comprising the collection of the late Z. T. Sweeney, who originated and planned the series and edited the volumes already distributed. The purpose of *New Testament Christianity,* as our friends may already know, is twofold; as Mr. Sweeney announced:

1. To let our preachers—especially our young preachers—get a clear insight into the aims of the *Restoration movement.* 2. To arm them for the defense of the movement.

The articles in the three books may be used freely by those interested without fear of plagiarism. "The material," as Mr. Sweeney said in Volume I, "is in no sense private property, but is the legacy of us all."

We are glad that we are in a position to continue the work designed by Mr. Sweeney, and appreciate the cordial reception of our efforts.

MRS. Z. T. SWEENEY.

Columbus, Indiana.

AIM OF THE DISCIPLES

By JOHN S. SWEENEY

THE aim of that religious people known willingly as "Disciples of Christ," or "Christians," is the subject of this discourse.

If their distinctive aim is not a good and worthy one, then there is no sufficient reason for their existence as a religious people. That they have such existence in considerable numbers and influence, especially in the United States, is a fact; but, unless by such separate existence they aim to accomplish some good work not as likely to be done without them, they are likely only to be the cause of a useless and an inexcusable disturbance in the religious world. Every person, every association of persons —in fact, every thing—should have some good reason assignable for its existence.

There are already quite enough churches, quite enough denominations, among the professed followers of Christ; and there can be no valid reason given for an attempt to create and maintain another; simply another denomination of Christians. It is believed by many that denominationalism is the

greatest internal foe, and some would even say the bane of Christianity today. The Disciples generally hold this view of it. To build up another denomination of Christians and add it to the long list already in existence, therefore is not the aim of the Disciples. And if they ever do so it will be in spite of a much worthier aim with which they started out. On the other hand, candor requires the acknowledgment, that their fundamental purpose is in its very nature hostile to all denominations, as such; not, of course, to Christians among denominations, but to denominationalism itself. To build up and maintain a mere denomination, however superior to those already in existence it might be, is not within the scope of their purpose.

To aid us in getting at what is the exact and distinctive aim of the disciples, it is important that we should have before us the state of things existing in what we call the religious world, in view of which their work was begun. And to aid us in getting a correct view of the situation we will suppose a case. It shall be one fairly supposable; one that might occur. We will take a young man twenty years old, and call him Jones, and locate him in Chicago. He is well educated for one of his age. He is not a church member, and has never even made a profession of religion; but has in common with us all a religious nature, and believes, in a general way, as most young men in Christian countries do, in the Christian religion. He is more than

ordinarily an independent thinker; takes a pride in thinking for himself on all questions in which he feels an interest. He determines in his own mind to become a Christian and a member of the church of God. He means to act intelligently in the matter or not at all. He is not going in this way or that, or to join this church or that, because somebody else did; but is going to investigate and understand the matter for himself—how to become a Christian and a member of the church of God, the true church founded by Jesus and the apostles. He is going to take nothing secondhand, but is going to the bottom of the whole matter that he may understand it for himself.

With this purpose he begins his investigations. And at the outset he meets a Roman Catholic priest, ready to enlighten him. The priest tells him, of course, that his church is the true church of God, the one founded by Jesus and the apostles, the only true church and infallible; that in his church he may be a Christian; out of it he will be a common sinner or at best a heretic. The priest preaches the church and presses its claims till he convinces young Jones that it is at least respectable; respectable for its antiquity, for its large membership, for its wealth and for its learning; claims that it is the very identical church which Jesus and the apostles founded on the Rock, of which Peter was the first pope.

After patiently hearing the speech young Jones decides that in pursuance of his purpose he must at

least make himself acquainted with the church of Rome and pass judgment upon her claims. But before beginning the investigation he chances to meet a representative of the Eastern or Greek church, who claims that his is the true, the orthodox, the infallible the only church of God; that in it, one can be a Christian; out of it, only a sinner or a heretic.

After hearing his speech young Jones decides that he must also study and pass upon the claims of the Greek church. This enlarges the field of investigation considerably. And while the young man is indulging some reflections upon the field of study opened by these two churches with their antiquities, their doctrines, traditions, customs, ceremonies, and infallibilities, he is approached by an Anglican of the city, anxious to enlighten him as to the English church. He too is a clergyman, a rector of one of the parishes of the city. He tells young Jones about his church. It is not Roman Catholic, or Greek Catholic, but English Catholic. He preaches against popery, but for apostolic succession: has a good deal to say about the church, the ministry, the fathers, the councils of the church, its prayer-book, its orthodox creed, its fasts and feasts, days, moons and seasons, pompous rites and ceremonies, its prayers and praises, suited to all climes and seasons—not exactly the work of the apostles themselves, but much the same thing in English, that of their direct lineal successors—almost infallible, if not quite. He tells him of all the learned and distinguished persons who

have been born and died in this church, and especially among the English speaking people of the world.

Young Jones hears the Anglican patiently and concludes that he must also weigh his church and decide upon its claims. And while he is considering the question where to begin and in what order to proceed in his theological and ecclesiastical investigations he meets a Protestant clergyman of the city, who, having heard of the enquiring turn his mind had taken recently, had come to enlighten him upon the great subject in which he was interested. He finds young Jones in some mental worry and confusion about true Christianity and the church of God, and undertakes at once to relieve him of his burdens by preaching Protestantism to him. He tells him, to begin with, that all the Catholic churches so called, the Roman, the Greek and the English, are only human, and in many respects very human; that their claims to infallibility are simply preposterous—three of them, at war among themselves, and yet each claiming to be infallible! He preaches Protestantism; tells him about the great reformation, about Martin Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Calvin, etc., etc., tells him that the Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants; tells him of the great doctrine of justification by faith only, of personal regeneration, experimental religion, of conscience, etc., etc.; and concludes that the way to be a Christian is to seek and obtain an

experimental knowledge of regeneration and forgiveness of sins by faith in Jesus Christ; and that the matter of church membership is of minor importance comparatively.

True, he continued, every Christian should join some church; but as to what one was in his judgment a matter of individual taste. In fact, while he thought every Christian should unite with some evangelical church, he did not hold church membership to be in any sense essential to salvation. Every one should be allowed to join the church of his own choice. He thought it well, if convenient, for young people to go into the church of their parents. Particularly he thought it looked well for husbands and wives to belong to the same church. He, of course, thought his own church the most Scriptural of all in its faith and practice; and he supposed every Christian thought as he did about the particular church of his choice.

Mr. Jones at this point interposes a question as to how many churches there are. The clergyman did not know exactly as to that; in fact he thought there was but one church of God, and all the so-called Protestant churches are but so many branches of that one church, each one claiming to be most Scriptural and evangelical in its doctrines and practices, and that this was the question about which Christians differed, and, he held, had a right to differ. Some thought, and he strongly inclined to that opinion himself, that it was a wise providential

arrangement that there were so many evangelical denominations, so that every one could find one suited to his own taste; and he thought there should be no angry discussions of the matter, but the fullest inter-denominational fellowship and communion of all evangelical Christians.

As young Jones had set out to understand for himself the way to become a Christian and a member of the church of God, the views of his Protestant friend added somewhat to his confusion. They were entirely too indefinite for him. In fact there seemed to him something in them bordering on the haphazard, especially in reference to the matter of church membership. It seemed to him that one might miss the church of God entirely if it be a thing so wholly undefined and with so many branches—so many evangelical branches. Of course evangelical was meant to distinguish certain branches from others unevangelical. And, again, allowing that there were so many evangelical branches and that one could certainly distinguish these from the unevangelical, there comes up the difficulty of deciding as to which of the evangelical branches is the most evangelical, the most Scriptural in its teaching and practice. He seemed to be getting into greater difficulties and deeper confusion for every lesson he took.

So Jones concludes to retire and review the whole matter. He does so and finds himself in about this predicament: Here are three churches, the Roman, the Greek, and the English, each claiming to be

Catholic, each claiming to be the church of God, each claiming to be the only true church, each claiming more or less stoutly to be infallible; and each one opening up before him a field of investigation that would require years of study. Then here is Protestantism with its innumerable evangelical denominations, and denominations unevangelical, each having its creed and customs, and each claiming to be most Scriptural in its faith and practice. Now must he go all over this vast field, must he investigate all these churches and denominations, and decide upon all questions of difference between them, before he can become a Christian and a member of the church of God? And is he certain that, should he live long enough to explore this vast field, he will in the end find a place where his soul can rest in certainty and peace? He is completely dazed—not exactly that, for that implies light: he is overwhelmed in confusion; and begins seriously to study the spiritual meaning of the word Babylon, as he has never done before.

Many an honest soul with earnest desire to understand what Christianity is, what and where the church of God is, has been lost in that confusion in which for a time we must leave young Jones. Some, alas! have never come out. Others in their disappointment and despair have fallen into unbelief and denounced all religion as a fraud and a failure.

But that we may still further and more fully get the situation before us—that is, the state of things in

the religious world in view of which the movement in which the Disciples are engaged was begun—we will resort to another supposition. We will suppose a convention of all Christians—a pan-Christian convention—in Chicago. All churches, and all branches of all churches, fallible and infallible, evangelical and unevangelical; all are represented in this convention. This is a supposable case, although it must be granted that such a thing is not likely to occur any time in the very near future. It is simply our supposition. That's all. We will suppose the representatives from all Christendom convene and an organization is effected without difficulty—another unlikely thing! But it's our supposition. And if something marvelous should follow such a convention, it need not be a cause of great surprise.

So we will suppose, and escape the imputation of irreverence, we hope, that the Apostle Paul appears in the meeting. He succeeds in satisfying all present that he is the Apostle Paul returned from the dead. He informs the brethren of the convention that God has sent him back to the world to serve him here awhile again; that he instructed him to come back and take his position in the church to which he belonged when here before, to preach the same Gospel, to labor for the propagation and spread of the same Christianity for the spread of which he labored when here before. He asks the brethren, where is the Christianity he planted, and where the church to which he belonged?

What would the convention do with him? Would it undertake to comply with his request? And should it undertake to do so, how far would it be likely to go without difference, discussion and division? Would the representative of the Roman Catholic church say that Romanism was the Christianity Paul preached and that he belonged to the Roman Catholic church? And if he did so claim, what would the other delegates say? And if they were to agree to it, which they certainly would not, what would Paul himself say? Would he not say—would he not be compelled by truth to say that he never in all his life heard of the Roman Catholic church, or of the Roman Catholicism? Paul a Roman Catholic! Just think of it!

Was there any such thing as Roman Catholicism in Paul's time? We have the history of his time. Is there anything in that about the Roman Catholic church? It seems almost like ridicule to ask the question. To speak of Roman Catholicism or of the Roman Catholic church in Paul's time is a palpable anachronism. And what is true of the Roman Catholic church in this respect is equally true of every church and denomination represented in our supposed pan-ecclesiastical convention. Paul in all his lifetime never heard of one of them. The history of his time is as silent as the grave about them all. Did Paul ever hear of the Greek church? Did he ever hear of the English church? Did he ever hear of any of the Protestant churches? To ask these

questions is to answer them in the negative, as every one acquainted with the scriptures knows. No intelligent and candid person will claim that any one of these churches existed when Paul was here. It can be claimed and it is true that each one of them holds and teaches some things taught by the apostle. This will not be questioned. But the fact that each one of them can maintain such a claim only complicates the matter more and more.

It is claimed that each one with its creed and customs has been evoked from what the apostles taught. But this cannot be true, for they do not agree one with another. They clash and are at war with each other. But what we wish to emphasize is the fact that no one of them, as a church with its creed and customs, existed in the time of the apostles. This must be admitted by all of them. Some of these churches are very old. This will be granted. But as churches they have all been born since Paul lived and died. Hence our supposed convention cannot answer the question for the Apostle as to the church he belonged to when in the world. There is absolutely no hope that any such convention could ever settle that question.

We are brought then to this conclusion: That the Christianity preached by the apostles, and the church they founded in the world and of which they were members, are older than all the creeds and churches and denominations of the present day. Christianity and the church of God are

older than all the creeds and denominations now in existence.

Now the question arises: Do we desire to find that primitive Christianity and church? Are they better than the denominationalism we have? We answer, *yes. Yes, a thousand times over.* In this conviction we are settled.

Well, can the *New Testament Christianity* and the *New Testament church* be eliminated from the creeds and churches of today? We think not. Every effort to do so will be a failure. In fact, every Protestant creed and church are but the result of an effort to do that very thing—to get back to Jesus and the apostles—to get back to primitive and New Testament Christianity. And every such effort has only increased and complicated the difficulties of the situation, by adding one more creed and one more denomination to the number theretofore in existence. Here are the mazes in which young Jones was lost.

Christianity and the church of God were before all the creeds and denominations of today. The Christianity and the church of the *New Testament* were established by the apostles. They were in the church and were Christians without knowing anything about the denominations and parties of our time. They were not Roman Catholics. They were not Greek Catholics. They were not English Catholics. They were not evangelical Protestants. *They were Christians.* They belonged to the church of God; not to a branch of it but to the church itself,

the body of Christ. Their Christianity and the church to which they belonged were divine.

Can we find that primitive Christianity and church? We have decided that we can, and that by the help of God we will direct all the people of God and the world to it. We believe that it is to be found in the *New Testament* and only there. This is generally conceded when the *New Testament* is said to be an all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. Then we must return to the *New Testament;* not through the creeds and churches, but directly. We will never get back if we undertake to go through all the creeds and churches in the order in which they came into being. Never in the world. The way to get back is to let go all creeds and parties, all humanisms, and go back. Let go just now, and right where we are, and return at once. That is the only way it can be done. Cut entirely loose, and at once, from all human creeds and parties, and return and take our stand with the apostles and first Christians. Can we do it? Certainly. The *New Testament* will afford us all the necessary light and means. If not, then it is not an all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. But we believe that it is, and to return to its teachings for our faith and practice, to make it, and it only, authoritative in all things essential to salvation. *This is our fundamental aim.*

We do not believe that we are the only people who desire primitive Christianity, while all others

prefer denominationalism. Nor do we believe we are the only people aiming to return to the church of the New Testament. We are aiming to accomplish what is almost universally desired by Christians. The advantage we claim is in the *method* we propose. The efforts Protestants have made heretofore have failed because their method was wrong. Every Protestant party has aimed to get back to New Testament Christianity by offering to Christians a better and more Scriptural human creed than any that had been tried before; and instead of getting back to the *New Testament* the creed only made a new party or denomination. If we wish ever to get back to apostolic Christianity we have got to put an end to the whole business of creed making. Instead of making better creeds than former ones we must get rid of them all. They must all go. If we would return to the *New Testament,* and if we would understand it when we get to it, we must not be trammeled by our human creeds.

There are persons who can see no way of serving the Lord without a creed, a human creed. Such persons should have something put down to their credit for their education; but they are greatly in error. They think that every body of Christian people should write out its faith; should formulate a creed and publish it to the world; that common honesty and fairness require this. We sometimes hear such persons reason, as they suppose, in this way:

"Nobody believes and is governed by the Bible

itself, but by his understanding of it, whether written or unwritten; then why not write out his understanding of the Bible that all may see and know what it is."

They often say to Disciples:

"We have a written creed and you have an unwritten one, and that's the difference between us, as to creeds."

This is rather specious. Let us look at it. Let us suppose that we cannot believe and be governed by the *New Testament,* as we propose, but only by our "understanding of it" as asserted; and that we ought to write out our "understanding" that every body may know what it is. Well, when we write out our "understanding" of the *New Testament,* can we then believe and be governed by that, or by our understanding of it? Only by our "understanding" of it, of course; and must we not write that out for the same reason that we wrote out our first "understanding"? Then we will have written our "understanding" of our understanding of the *New Testament!*

And so we must proceed perpetually, unless at some time we succeed in doing what the Holy Spirit through inspired men could not do, namely, in writing out something in which we can believe and be governed by without having to write out an "understanding" of it! Can we hope to do that which the Holy Spirit could not or did not do? We think not. It is better not to begin the endless business of writ-

ing out interpretations or understandings of the *New Testament.*

Do parties who have their written creeds succeed any better with them in stopping the mouths of false teachers, in getting rid of heretics, than we do without such creeds? That's a question we might do well to consider. The fact is, human creeds only increase the trouble they are made to prevent, or to rid the church of. And this because, as interpretations of what the Spirit of God has said, they interpret too much. They make more essentials to salvation and more conditions to Christian fellowship than the Holy Spirit has made. The difficulty generally with men as lords is that they lord too much. The fundamental difficulty with all human governments is that they aim to govern too much; and hence in nothing govern very well. In religion we should not try to contract the wide margin God has left for individual freedom of thought and conduct.

But it is objected, again, that if we abandon all creeds, churches, and denominations and return at once, as we propose, to the *New Testament* we shall fail of "succession," "apostolic succession." That is, we will thereby fall out of the line of succession. With some people that would be a great matter. Many are depending upon apostolic succession for their salvation. But the fact is, that apostolic succession in the sense of an unbroken series of ordinations from the apostles down to their alleged suc-

cessors of today—that is, a succession of official men all through the Christian dispensation—is simply an ecclesiastical figment. The Roman Catholic church claims it stoutly. So does the Greek church, but perhaps a little less stoutly. So does the English church. And so also the Syrian, the Coptic and the Armenian churches, the Protestant Episcopal church in the United States, and various Protestant denominations. But so long as there can be nothing found about it in the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, we care but little about it. Let it go along with all the other rubbish we must lose in returning to the *New Testament.* The succession we want is that of the *truth* and not of men. We want the truth the apostles had and preached. We can find that in the *New Testament,* and only there.

If we believe just what the apostles believed, confess just what they confessed, and do just what they did—if, in other words, we *believe* what they required people to believe, *confess* what they required them to confess, and *do* what they required them to do, and are content to *be* what they required people to be—will not that reproduce apostolic Christianity? That is the succession we want. All the claims to a succession of ordained men from the apostles down to the present are simply preposterous.

There are many who admit the all-sufficiency of the *New Testament* as a rule of faith and practice, and that a return to it as the only authoritative creed is desirable; but deny that we have succeeded

or are likely to succeed in doing so. In other words, they admit that our aim is a good one, but claim that our effort to carry it out has been and is a failure. They deny that we are any more apostolic in our faith and practice than others who hold to their human creeds, denominational organizations and names. They think they see and are able to show that we are no nearer New Testament Christianity and the New Testament church than when we abandoned denominationalism. They think we are as much a sect as any of the sects our fathers left and against which we have been inveighing these seventy years past.

We are fallible. Mr. Campbell and his coadjutors were all fallible men. This we admit. But we claim confidently that our aim is a good one, but admit that we may not have been entirely successful in our effort to carry it into effect. We need the help of all such persons as can show us wherein we have failed. They can be of great assistance to us. And all such persons as believe our aim is good but our effort a failure ought to be willing to help us. Better that, than misrepresent and abuse us.

But now let us take a brief look, and as impartial a one as we can, at what the Disciples have accomplished. There are in the United States alone, we will venture to say, not less than eight thousand churches or congregations of them, aggregating a membership of little if any less than seven hundred thousand. They have established several universi-

ties, a good many colleges and a great many schools. They have published a great many books and tracts, and are sustaining quite a number of newspapers. They are nearly all preachers; all advocating a return to the *New Testament* in all things essential to salvation or to fellowship and communion in Christ Jesus. All this has been done without a human creed, without any denominational organization or centralization, without any party name, simply as disciples of Christ or Christians. There is no uninspired writing today that is in any sense authoritative among us. This all well informed and candid persons will admit. Others have sometimes said that some of the writings of Mr. Campbell are authoritative over us. It is sufficient to say simply that this is not true.

Our congregations are getting on quite as peacefully and prosperously, too, as any of the denominations do with their creeds. We find quite a sufficiency in the *New Testament* to believe, as well as for our government. We are learning, too, to have opinions without forcing them upon others; to allow others to entertain opinions to which we can not subscribe. We are learning that there are many things even in religion that none of us is able to explain to the satisfaction of all others. We believe that God will hold us responsible only for what He has plainly revealed to us. As in other matters He leaves us free, we ought to be willing to leave each other free. We should not want to bind each other where

God has left us all free. Naturally men are tyrants; the more ignorant, the greater. We are learning to allow others to be free as ourselves where God has not bound us. Nor do we have to receive and countenance every false teacher that comes along simply because we have no human creed. We can let go such when it becomes necessary with as great facility as the parties who have creeds, made and adopted for that very purpose.

The Disciples, then, have demonstrated the feasibility of Christians getting on together without any creed but the *New Testament,* which fifty years ago Protestants almost universally proclaimed an impossibility. We have succeeded in getting back of all the creeds, and in this respect, are standing just where the Christians did when the apostles were here. Not only so; we have lived to see human creeds, once held to be so necessary, all certainly and rapidly going into decadence; falling into desuetude. It is only a question of time with them. The knell of their doom has been sounded.

And now, coming to the *New Testament* as the only authority in matters of Christian faith and practice, we have to be careful. There must be no deviation from our method either to the right or the left.

What must a sinner *believe* in order to get salvation and membership in the church of God? Our answer must be just what we can put our finger upon in so many words in the *New Testament.* All that

the apostles required we must require, and no more. We must accept their own statements of the subject matter of belief, and not substitute our explanations of them. Our explanations will not make them plainer. Then, again, the explanation business once begun will prove interminable. For instance, when the Apostle, speaking of the written testimonies of his Gospel, says: "These are written that ye might believe, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." (John xx:31.) We must be satisfied with that simple statement and require persons to "*believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.*" No light needs to be thrown upon this simple apostolic statement other than that derived from other statements of the subject matter of belief to be found in the *New Testament.* If we require sinners to believe just what the apostles did, no more, no less, we will succeed in carrying out our aim in this respect; will we not?

As to the verbal *confession* we require of those who would come into the church, we must be able to put our finger upon that also in the words of the *New Testament.* There will be great temptations to make slight departures. It will be so easy, so orthodox, and so compromising, to add a little to "the good confession" of the *New Testament!* But we must stand firm.

And so as to what sinners are to *do*, we must stand upon the words of the commission and of the apostles in their preaching under the commission.

What the apostles required persons to do to be saved, that and all that, and only that, we must require. We have in Acts of Apostles their instructions to sinners in all conceivable conditions: to such as had not heard the word of the Lord and believed (Acts xvi:31); to such as had heard the word and had believed (Acts ii:38); and to such as were penitent, praying, believers (Acts xxii:16); and we must closely track these instructions, in telling sinners what to *do*.

In respect of what must be *believed*, what must be *confessed*, and what must be *done*, by the sinner in order to get salvation, it may be claimed, fearless of contradiction sustained, that the disciples have returned to and do stand upon apostolic precept and precedent. If any one thinks not it is a matter easily tested. We are willing to be tried. Let him who thinks he can, show that, in respect of the belief, the confession and the obedience required of sinners by the apostles, we require more or less than they did. A fair and an honest trial will convince intelligent doubters. It is true that in the creeds and customs of the churches and denominations there is so much, along here, wholly unknown to the *New Testament* and with which the people educated in such creeds and customs have become familiarized, it is difficult to draw the line between truth and error and make them see it readily. With many, custom is as potent as plain Scripture teaching.

In the formation of churches, in our public ob-

servances and devotions, and in all that we call church government and discipline, we have to be equally careful to make nothing essential to fellowship or anywise authoritative, but apostolic precept and precedent. This we are aiming to do. If in anything we are yet wrong, a strict adherence to our rule will assuredly bring us right. Only let us be sure not to go into the business of legislating and making rules of government. We shall have some differences and discussions. But there is nothing alarming about that. We are not all dead people. Creeds do not put an end to discussions among those who adopt them. If differences and discussions are evil, human creeds are not a cure for them. Our differences and discussions do not grow out of the fact that we have no human creed; but out of the fact that we are mortal men and women, and fallible like other folks. Is it not a fact that no association of men and women has ever existed for any length of time in this world without differences and discussions? Are we sure that dead calms are always and everywhere desirable? The winds put a rough surface upon the waters, stir up their depths, uproot trees, tumble down houses, and often destroy life; but they do more good than harm nevertheless. While they make themselves often very disagreeable it is, however, better to have them blow occasionally. Spiritual stagnation is not always the best thing to have. Why, the very thought even of a spiritual state of things in this world that allows

of no liberty of opinion, no differences and discussions is perfectly suffocating! But *this* can be said of the Disciples: That in all these matters made essential to salvation and membership in the church of God by the apostles no people are characterized by more perfect accord and harmony—that is, no living, free people.

Of course, in carrying out our purpose, quite a revolution will be wrought in all our nomenclature. We shall have to call *New Testament* things by *New Testament* names. This will throw us out of accord with the churches and denominations. In speaking of the body of Christ in general, and of the churches in different localities, and of the disciples or Christians as such, we must apply only *New Testament* names.

It is just at this point that we meet the fiercest and most determined opposition from the denominations. It is almost an impossibility for many among them to understand us, it would seem, and when they do, the more bigoted among them most stubbornly resist us. They insist that we ought to take upon ourselves some party name—some unscriptural name—as they have done, so that in speaking of us they can do so without applying to us *New Testament* names.

If we would only meet in convention, or in some other formal way, adopt a name not once applied to the disciples by the apostles—no matter though we did it under guise of a convenience for the

census bureau—we would at once be generally recognized as an "orthodox denomination of Christians." As it is, however, we are called "Campbellites," "New Lights," "Reformers,"—anything but a *New Testament* name. We are accused of arrogance, in appropriating to ourselves the names that all Christians in all churches are equally entitled to —as if we were the only "Christians" or "disciples of Christ" in the world! But however arrogant we may seem in the eyes of such as do not understand us as well as we understand ourselves, we must stand firmly on our line here. Surrendering here we surrender our principle, and surrendering our principle we surrender all. There is no arrogance in our position. It only seems so to such as do not see what a huge wrong and departure denominationalism is.

Do not those who refuse to call us "Christians" themselves profess to be "Christians?" Do they not profess to be "disciples of Christ," at the same time they refuse to so designate us? They certainly do. Then where is our arrogance? Really, what partisans have against us is not simply that we profess to be "Christians" or "disciples of Christ," but that we will not profess to be something *else;* that we will not profess to be partisans. They would be willing for us to progress to be "disciples of Christ" or "Christians," and make no complaint about it, if we would only take a name meaning something outside of the *New Testament,* for them

to call us by. But we cannot do it. The *New Testament* believed and obeyed makes Christians and not partisans, and when all professed followers of Jesus return to the faith and practice of that book, partyism and denominationalism will disappear. Then where will be our arrogance?

Finally, we are told that our position unchristianizes all others but ourselves. That is, in accepting only *New Testament* names for ourselves and for our congregations, and in calling the body of Christ at large only by *New Testament* designations, we dechristianize all who wear party names. We, however, fail to see the matter so. We dechristianize nobody. Does our professing to be Christian unchristian anyone else? Surely not. Well, does our refusing to be or be called, anything else, unchristianize others? Certainly not. How, then, do we unchristian all but ourselves? Does our wearing the Christian name logically imply that nobody else is a Christian? It certainly does not. As a matter of fact the disciples have ever held from the beginning of their effort to return to primitive Christianity, and do hold that every Christian, whether identified with any of the denominations or not, not only has a right to be, but ought to be, simply a Christian and to wear only *New Testament* names, as we ourselves are aiming to do.

We claim no exclusive right to anything in the *New Testament.* We claim for all that it contains primitive, apostolic Christianity; that we all can

learn from it what the Lord would have us believe, and do, and be, and hope; that it may be as easily understood as any of the human creeds; and that if all Christians, and all who would be Christians, will turn away from human standards to this divine one, they may get rid of all that is human and false and be united upon what is divine and true that thus, and only thus, can all Christians be united in one body.

PLEA TO RESTORE THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

By JAMES C. CREEL

IN the early part of the nineteenth century, Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, Walter Scott and others, began the reformatory or restoration movement, sometimes called the Current Reformation. In this restoration movement it was sought to restore the faith and practice of the inspired apostles of Jesus the Christ, and thus reproduce the apostolic church. Hence, we have *The Plea to Restore the Apostolic Church*. This same matchless plea is made today by us, the children of the fathers, who claim to be simply disciples of Christ, or Christians only, and belong to the Church of Christ only.

I. *What Called Forth the Plea?* The plea to restore the apostolic church was called forth because of grave departure or falling away from "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." Modern denominationalism, with its warring sects and conflicting creeds, is proof that there has been serious departure from primitive Chris-

tianity. Furthermore, the apostle Paul clearly foretells of a coming departure of falling away from the faith in these words: "But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men who speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth" (I Tim.iv:1-4).

Again, the same apostle says: "Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by espistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is just at hand; let no man beguile you in any wise; for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God." (II Thess.ii:1-4.)

It appears that this foretold "falling away" from the faith was to begin among the elders and teachers of the church as indicated in the words of Paul to the elders at Ephesus, and to Timothy. To the "elders" or "bishops" at Ephesus, he says: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to the flock, in

which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord that he purchased with his own blood. I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts xx:17,28-30). To Timothy, the apostle gives this solemn charge:

"I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the quick and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts, and will turn away their ears from the truth and turn aside unto fables" (II Tim.iv:1-4).

II. *The Apostolic Church.* The word "church," in the New Testament use, means, first, in its limited sense, a local assembly or congregation *called out;* an assembly of baptized believers called out, called of God by Christ through the Gospel into the service and worship of God. In its more extended sense, the church means all the true disciples of Christ in the aggregate, all Christians, the whole body of Christ, the kingdom of heaven on earth. Christ said to Simon Peter: "Upon this rock I will build *my* church" (Matt.xvi:18). It is then Christ's

church, of the Church of Christ; for He builded it. Christ builded the church through the ministry of His inspired apostles. The apostle Paul speaks of himself "as a wise master-builder" in laying the foundation of "the church of God that is at Corinth" (I Cor.i:10). What is here true of Paul is evidently true of all the apostles, in that they were "wise master-builders" of the Church of Christ. Therefore, Christ, through the preaching or ministry of the apostles, builded the church. Hence we have *the apostolic church,* which was founded by Christ through the inspired apostles.

In the beginning the apostolic church, as founded by Christ, was in faith, doctrine, organization, government, worship, terms of administration, terms of fellowship and unity, just what He would have it be. Since Christ is the sole head and supreme lawgiver, there can be no additions to these things nor subtractions therefrom. What Christ has done, and what He has done through His inspired apostles, needs no improvement, and can not be improved upon.

The faith of the apostolic church was faith in the Christ. Its doctrine was the preaching and teaching of the inspired apostles, who taught all things whatsoever commanded by the Christ. Its organization consisted solely in the organization of the local congregation; and these local congregations were called "Churches of Christ" (Rom. xvi:16). Its government was wholly congrega-

tional, in which the revealed law of Christ was supreme in all things. Each congregation or local church was composed of "saints," "bishops" or "elders" and "deacons" (Phil. i:1), in which the bishops or elders took the oversight, ruled and taught the congregation, while the deacons were the servants. Its worship was the simple worship of the Father in spirit and in truth through the Christ, the one mediator between God and man. Its terms of admission were faith in Christ, repentance, confession and baptism; or being *born again* "born of water and the Spirit." Christ gives the terms or law of admission in these words: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii:5). Its only terms of fellowship were *faith in the Christ and obedience to Him* in all things. Its unity consisted of a spiritual oneness of all those in Christ; a oneness in the faith which is in Christ, and the doctrine taught by Christ through His inspired apostles.

To get before the mind fully and clearly just what the plea to restore the apostolic church does mean, it will be well, in the first place, to learn what the plea does *not* mean; and then clearly see what the plea *does mean.* In this way a full presentation of the subject can be made.

III. *What the Plea Does Not Mean.*

1. The plea to restore the apostolic church does *not* mean simply a reformation of some church, or "the church." The original Church of Christ, the

apostolic church, in faith and doctrine, needs no reformation. Therefore, the plea to restore the apostolic church does not mean simply a reformation.

2. The plea does *not* mean another church, or some *new* church. There are too many churches of the kind already, and *new* churches at that. The religious world, to-day, is burdened with the modern sectarian churches. What the world needs is the one *old* church, the original Church of Christ, in all its primitive faith and doctrine. Therefore, the plea does not mean another church, or some new church.

3. The plea does *not* mean another denomination or sect. All denominationalism or sectarianism is exceedingly sinful before God, and positively forbidden by His word; and, like all other sins, it must be repented of and forever abandoned. All denominationalism is wholly subversive of the unity of the one body of Christ, the one apostolic church. The original Church of Christ was not a denomination or a sect. In the very nature of things, those who make the plea to restore the apostolic church, who claim to be Christians only and belong to the Church of Christ only, can never be a denomination or a sect. Therefore, the plea does not mean another denomination or sect.

4. The plea does *not* mean another human creed, human confession of faith or human rule of faith and practice. All human creeds, confessions of

faith and books of discipline are divisive, and have produced all the denominations or sects that have rent the Church of God. For instance, take up any one of the leading creeds or confessions of faith of modern denominationalism, and just count the different kinds of parties or denominations produced by that particular creed which can be counted by the scores, yes, even by the hundreds. Every human creed, human confession of faith or human rule of faith and practice, as a bond of union and communion among professed Christians, is a subversion of the law of Christ and a reflection upon divine wisdom. Therefore, the plea does not mean another human creed, human confession of faith or human rule of faith and practice.

IV. *What the Plea Does Mean.*

1. The plea to restore the apostolic church means a restoration. It means a complete return "to original ground, and take up things just as the apostles left them," and thus reproduce *or restore New Testament Christianity* in all things. It means the going back beyond all human creeds, decrees of popes, councils, synods, assemblies and associations, to Christ and the inspired apostles, and *restore* all things wherein there has been departure or apostacy. The plea means the rejection of all human imitations, and the restoration of the divine model in all things "that pertain to life and godliness."

The advocates of the plea to restore the apostolic

church, those who are Christians only and belong to the Church of Christ only, occupy a unique position. The early reformers, such men as Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley and others, sought mightily to accomplish a reformation of the then existing corrupt church or churches. They did a great and lasting work in their way; but none of these great reformers appears to have sought *restoration* of the one primitive Church of Christ. Their work was a reformation only, while the great work of the advocates of the plea to restore the apostolic church is a *restoration.*

2. The plea to restore the apostolic church means *the restoration* of the one divine creed and the one divine rule of faith and practice. The word "creed," from *credo,* I believe, means, strictly speaking, a *summary* of what one believes. There is this distinction between what is called a *creed* and a *rule* of faith and practice; namely, the creed is a summary of what is believed, a summary of "the faith," while the rule of faith and practice is "the faith" itself. In other words, the true creed is the summary of the *New Testament,* while the true rule of faith and practice is the *New Testament* itself.

The one divine creed, the summary of the whole religion of Jesus Christ, the summary of *New Testament* Christianity, is expressed in this one plain proposition: *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.* If this proposition is true, then all else is true; then all that Jesus said, did and commanded

through His apostles is true; then He is divine and "died for our sins," and arose from the dead the third day. This one divine creed is simple, containing just one article; yet, at the same time, it is all-comprehensive, taking in the whole Messiahship, Lordship and divinity of Jesus. No one can believe more in reference to Christianity than is expressed in this heaven-born creed. This one divine creed needs no revision, no additions, no subtractions, nor any improvement whatever, to meet the wants of all the ages to come. What is needed to-day in the religious world is the restoration of this one divine creed and the complete abandonment of all human creeds.

The one divine rule of faith and practice in the religion of Jesus Christ is the pure word of God, especially the *New Testament*. This is all-sufficient to instruct and guide man in all religious faith and practice, being a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path. An inspired apostle says: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (II Tim.iii:16,17).

Another inspired writer says: "For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the

heart'' (Heb. iv:12). Jesus says: ''The words that I have spoken unto you, they are spirit, and they are life'' (John vi:63). Paul says: ''For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek'' (Rom. i:16). All of this being true of the word of God, then certainly it is all and alone sufficient as the one divine rule of faith and practice.

In the beginning, before there had been a falling away from the faith, and for more than a hundred years after the complete establishment of the Church of Christ on the earth, the disciples of Christ had no other creed than the divine creed, and no other rule of faith and practice than the one divine rule of faith and practice, the word of the Lord. When false teachers arose and ambitious men began their evil work in the churches, then human creeds and human rules of faith and practice were born to curse the Church of God with sects and sectarianism. The restoration of the one divine creed and the one divine rule of faith and practice, means the complete abolishment of all human creeds and human rules of faith and practice, and the destruction of all sects and sectarianism among the professed followers of Christ.

3. The plea to restore the apostolic church means *the restoration* of the faith and practice of the inspired apostles of the Christ. In the *New Testament* we have a complete and inspired presen-

tation of the whole faith and practice of the apostles. Then to the *New Testament* only we must go to learn the things spoken by the apostles of the Christ, as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance; for it is said of them: "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts ii:4).

The faith of the apostles means the faith they exercised themselves, and commanded all men to have in order to the saving of their souls. The faith of the apostles is a personal faith, faith in the divine person, Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. With the apostles the question was not simply, *what* do you believe? but the question was, *whom* do you believe? or, *in whom* do you believe? Do you believe *in the Christ?* is the vital question. Hence, when the jailor asked the soul-stirring question, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" an inspired apostle answered in these words: "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,* and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts xvi:31). Faith in the Christ is faith that trusts in the Christ for salvation. Trust in the Christ is to take Christ at His word, and do what He says or commands. No one trusts in Christ unless he obeys Christ in His commandments. Hence, trust in Christ goes just as far as obedience in Christ goes.

Faith in the Christ is the "one faith," and the apostle Peter calls it "precious faith" (II Pet.i:1).

This "one faith," "precious faith," saves because it is faith in the one precious Saviour of sinners. Faith in the Christ, while it is always a personal faith, faith in a divine person, at the same time it means the belief of *what is affirmed* of the divine person called the Christ. Hence, the apostle John says: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing (that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God) ye may have life in his name" (John xx:30,31). This, then, is the faith of the apostles, the "one faith" commanded in the Gospel. This "one faith" in the Christ, which believes "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," is the one divine confession of faith, which with repentance admitted persons to baptism and through baptism into the primitive apostolic church.

The practice of the apostles means all that the apostles preached, taught, commanded, did and wrote for universal observance in all time to come, as they were miraculously endowed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The practice of the apostles covers the whole ground, takes in the whole truth as it is in Jesus, and all the dear Lord would have us to know, to practice and to be. It takes in the whole apostolic church in all its faith, doctrine, practice and life, and leads to the salvation and glorification of redeemed man in "a new

heaven and a new earth." All of this, as it is now given by divine inspiration, and once for all, in the *New Testament,* is the faith and practice of the inspired apostles of the Christ.

The restoration of the faith and practice of the apostles means a complete return in all things wherein there has been a falling away or departure from the original apostolic faith and practice. It means the undoing of all religious error by reproducing the once for all revealed truth in all its primitive fullness and simplicity, and persuading all men everywhere to accept it and rejoice in it to the salvation of their souls.

The restoration of the faith and practice of the apostles means to reproduce, or restore, the apostolic church; for in the faith and practice of the apostles only, we have the one original apostolic church in all its divine fullness. Therefore, the restoration of the faith and practice of the apostles means the restoration of the apostolic church in all things. In other words, we restore the apostolic church as we restore the faith and practice of the inspired apostles of the Christ.

4. The plea to restore the apostolic church means *the restoration* of the original unity or oneness of the body of Christ, the Church of Christ. When a view is taken of the present state of the religious world, it will be seen that the vast majority of the professed followers of the Christ are divided into more than three hundred parties, sects or denomina-

tions. What an awful havoc the falling away from the faith has produced! It is enough to make the very angels weep, and almost forget that they are "sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation!" How painful it must be to the dear Lord to behold the divided and distracted state of His children! Sectarianism or denominationalism is the great blot upon modern Christianity; and it is doing more to encourage skepticism and infidelity than all other causes combined.

The Christ earnestly prayed, in His great intercessory prayer, for the unity or oneness of all His disciples in these words: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John xvii:20,21).

The oneness for which Christ prayed is the original oneness or unity that existed in the primitive body of Christ, the Church of Christ, the unity of the apostolic church. The primitive disciples of Christ were one, as the Father is in the Christ and the Christ is in the Father. They were one as the Father and the Christ are one—one *in* the Father and *in* the Christ. To be *in* the Father and *in* the Christ means the same as to be "in Christ." To be in Christ is to be completely under the authority and government of the Christ, and be in spiritual

union and communion with the Christ and with all those in the Christ.

Therefore, the oneness for which Christ prayed is the spiritual oneness of all those in the Christ. All those in Christ are to be one, "one body." Hence, Paul says: "So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another" (Rom. xii:5). This "one body" is the body of Christ, which the apostle affirms in these words: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof" (I Cor. xii:27). "The body of Christ" is "the church," the Church of Christ, the one apostolic church, which is declared in these words: "And he is the head of the body, the church" (Col. i:18). In all this is plainly taught the oneness or unity of the primitive disciples of the Christ, the unity of the apostolic church.

The oneness of the disciples of Christ, or the unity of the apostolic church, is further taught in what is called "the unity of the Spirit," which evidently means the unity taught or produced by the Holy Spirit. The apostle admonishes the "saints who are at Ephesus and the faithful in Christ Jesus," to give diligence "to keep the unity of the Spirit," in these words: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to

keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'' Then the apostle declares what ''the unity of the Spirit'' is, in the following words: ''There is one body, and one Spirit, even also as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all'' (Eph. iv:1-6). Here, then, the unity of the Spirit, in seven units, may be briefly presented as follows:

(1) The *one body,* the body of Christ, the church; (2) the *one spirit,* the Holy Spirit who animates the one body, and who convicts and converts sinners; (3) the *one hope,* the one hope of immortality or eternal life; (4) the *one Lord,* who is the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords; (5) the *one faith,* the one faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ; (6) the *one baptism,* the one baptism ''in water,'' ''into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit''; (7) the *one Father,* the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,'' ''the Father of Spirits,'' ''our Father who art in heaven.'' Wherever, among the professed followers of the Christ, is to be found the *seven units* of ''the unity of the Spirit,'' there the unity of the apostolic church is to be found, as taught in the *New Testament.*

In the foregoing we have the oneness of the disciples of Christ for which He prayed, ''the unity of the Spirit,'' the unity of the apostolic church. Now, then, the plea to restore the apostolic church

means *the complete restoration* of this divine oneness or unity in all its primitive fullness and simplicity.

V. *The Results to Be Accomplished by the Plea.* The results to be accomplished by the plea to restore the apostolic church, in the present divided state of Christendom, are great. Some of these results, briefly presented, are as follows:

1. The original Church of Christ, the apostolic church, in its faith, doctrine, organization, government, unity, worship, terms of admission, and terms of fellowship, will be fully restored, or reproduced, among all Christians everywhere.

2. All the followers of the Christ will be simply disciples of Christ, or Christians *only,* just what they were in the days of the apostles. They will be just plain Christians and not something else, in the way of some denominational distinction, or having upon them some sectarian label to distinguish them from other Christians.

3. All Christians will belong to the church of Christ *only.* They will simply belong to the Church of Christ without belonging to something else in the way of some modern denomination or sectarian church. The Church of Christ is just big enough to contain all Christians.

4. All Christians will accept and believe the one divine creed only, and be governed solely by the one divine rule of faith and practice. They will all have the "one faith" in the Christ, and the one

divine confession of faith. They will all have the same doctrine, the divine doctrine of the Christ and His inspired apostles.

5. Among all Christians there will be the "one body," the "one Spirit," the "one hope," the "one Lord," the "one faith," the "one baptism," the "one God and Father of all." Then all Christians will give "diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the body of peace."

6. The earnest prayer which Christ prayed for the oneness of all His disciples will be answered. There will be Christian union, fellowship, fraternity and love among all professed Christians everywhere. There will be no denominations, sects nor conflicting creeds, to mar the peace and harmony of the children of God. The world will believe the Father has sent the Christ to bless and save it. Then will begin the true golden age in which "peace on earth and good will toward men" will universally prevail.

VI. *The Practical Application of the Plea.* In making and putting into effect the plea to restore the apostolic church, there are some governing rules or principles to be observed in the practical application of the plea. These governing rules or principles, which need to be emphasized, are as follows:

1. The all and alone sufficiency of the word of God, especially the *New Testament,* as the one complete guide in all religious faith and practice.

2. In all matters of faith and doctrine, "where

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the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."

3. In all matters of faith and doctrine, not simply in matters of opinion or methods of work or questions of expediency, there must be an express command of the word of God or on approved example or a necessary inference.

4. Not anything shall be made a test of Christian fellowship and communication and co-operation, but faith in Christ and obedience to Him in all things.

With these governing rules or principles to guide us, we are now prepared to give the practical application of the plea to restore the apostolic church. This will be done by giving an illustration in the following supposed example:

In the town of Francesville there are five distinct denominational churches, known as the Baptist Church, the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Congregational Church and the Episcopal Church. In a conference of the ministers and the leaders of these five churches it is unanimously agreed that a union revival shall be held in which all the churches shall join, hand and heart. After deliberation and earnest prayer on the part of the ministers and leaders, it is also agreed that nothing distinctive of any particular denominational church shall be preached in the union meeting; that all the preaching shall be simply the preaching of the Christ and Him crucified, or the preaching of the simple Gospel, or the preaching of just what the

apostles preached when they turned people to the Lord. It is further agreed, that all persons who desire to become simply Christians, and manifest that desire by coming forward, shall be instructed, just as the apostles instructed such persons, to believe in the Christ with the whole heart, sincerely repent, confess the Christ and obey Him in baptism.

The union revival now begins with great interest, and a good feeling prevails in the hearts of all. Night after night the good work goes on, with the increased desire for the saving of souls. The simple preaching of the Gospel of the Christ, just what the apostles preached, is felt in all its power, and the people are moved by it. Sinners are plainly told to believe in the Christ, repent of their sins, confess the Christ and obey Him in baptism. Sinners thus instructed respond by the scores, and rejoice in their conversion to the Christ. The great union meeting now draws to a close; and one hundred new converts to the Christ are the immediate results. All these converts have truly believed in the Christ, sincerely repented, confessed the Christ and obeyed Him in being baptized.

Now, then, what are these new converts converted in the union revival? Are they Baptists or Methodists or Presbyterians? No, not at all. To become Baptists or Methodists or Presbyterians, they will have to *join* the Baptist, Methodist or Presbyterian Church. Well, are they Congregationalists or Episcopalians? Not a bit of it. As

yet, no sectarian label whatever can be put upon these new converts. To what denomination do these new converts belong? Not any. Well, then, in reality, what are these new converts at the close of the union revival? Why, they are just *Christians.* All certainly will agree that they are simply Christians, Christians *only;* that is all they are. To what church do these new converts, Christians only, belong? Why, to the Church of Christ, of course, which is composed of all true Christians. They entered the Church of Christ in becoming simply Christians; for whatever makes a person a Christian puts that person into the Church of Christ, the one body of Christ, the apostolic church.

At the close of the union meeting the one hundred new converts conclude that, as they are now Christians only, and already belong to the Church of Christ only, all that the dear Lord would have them be and belong to, they will not divide up and go into the different denominational churches at Francesville. They immediately assemble on the Lord's Day and covenant with one another to keep house for the Lord, making the word of God the man of their counsel in all things. They engage in the worship of God, prayer, praise and the reading of the Scriptures. They partake of the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of the Christ, by virtue of the fact that they are Christians, and have this right and privilege because of the common priesthood of all Christians under the reign of the

Christ. They meet every Lord's Day and engage in the service and worship of God. Then, as they develop and grow in the divine life, they set apart certain suitable persons of their number to be leaders in the worship and all the work; such as elders or pastors, or bishops, deacons or evangelists. Now, then, what are they? Why, they are just a local congregation of Christians, or a local Church of Christ only, because they are Christians only, and belong to the Church of Christ only.

The work begins to grow and spread abroad. The brethren, these Christians only, send some of their numbers and begin a similar work in the town of Coraville, by establishing a Church of Christ there. The two churches now co-operate in the good work, and start another Church of Christ in the village of Tarpley. On the work goes till some twenty "Churches of Christ" are established in the surrounding country. These Christians only, go everywhere "preaching the word," building up Churches of Christ and setting "in order the things that are wanting." Many of the "denominational Christians are giving up all denominationalism, becoming Christians only, and belonging to the Church of Christ only, and thus joining in a good work of establishing simply Churches of Christ everywhere.

Now, these Churches of Christ thus established have the one divine creed and the one divine rule of faith and practice. In all matters of faith and doc-

trine, where the Scriptures speak, they speak; where the Scriptures are silent, they are silent. They have no tests of Christian fellowship, communion and co-operation other than faith in Christ and obedience to Him. In all the work of these Christians only, as far as it goes, there is an illustration of the practical application of the plea to restore the apostolic church.

MY CHURCH

By MOSES E. LARD

DO not infer, kind reader, from the above caption that I really own a church. Such an inference would be a gross nonsequitur. I own no church; and in this am most unpardonably unlike "*the city pastors.*" But you tell me some very good people believe in pastors owning churches. I collect this from a remark made by a gentleman in my presence just now. He stated that on last *sabbath* he attended divine service in *Mr. Tully's church.* He heard a very excellent sermon from this most amiable *divine.* There was nothing doctrinal in it and all parties went away declaring they were *so* pleased. I believe, too, I have heard many speak of *Mr. Elton's church.* They spoke, if I am right, particularly of the organ and of its beautiful tones, of the accomplished choir, and of the church as being a very desirable place to visit on account of the wealth and fashion that frequent it. I doubt not many excellent folks really believe that Mr. Tully and Mr. Elton own these churches; and however much I may feel inclined to differ from people

in some things, in this at least I am in no condition to offer a very robust dissent. I am much of the opinion that the gentlemen named really own the churches where they officiate. At least until I have some evidence that there is a *higher* claim to them, I shall not question their rights.

But, reader, understand me: although I own no church, yet I am most anxious to own one, i.e., a house; and as I have not the slightest hope of ever having one unless I build it, I have concluded at once to address myself to that task. My church shall be a fabric in the air; it hence will be cheap. True it is not exactly the thing I should like to call mine, but a sort of shadowy image of it, a dim outcasting of the mind's draft. Should you at any time, while my work is going forward, find yourself inclined to question it, remember that you have not the slightest right to do so. The work is most strictly mine, is in no sense yours, and hence you have no right to demur. Besides there is much folly—a thing of which, of course, you can never be guilty—in objecting to things so unsubstantial as mere schemes of the brain; especially, before they are matured, and made to wear some visible, bodily form. Be silent, then, and question nothing respecting my airy work.

My determination is formed; my house shall be of bricks resting upon a substantial basis of stone. The bricks shall be pressed bricks, soundly burnt, with all edges straight, and angles sharp. They

shall lie in mortar thin and fine, with seams small, and lines without a fault. My walls shall be massive, severely plain, finished inside and out, in every whit to the line of the plummet. My roof shall stand at no odd angle, and shall be covered with slate in the best style. This will last, exclude all water, and will give to my house an air of deep gravity. My cornice shall be heavy and plain, jutting well over the walls; with not a seam, joint, nail head, or mark of a hammer to be seen. My roof shall be adorned with no horns, no battlements, no turrets, no pinnacles, no lightning-daring steeples. No creaking, slamming window shutters in deep green shall disgrace the walls of my house. In front shall stand a single door, an ample, heavy, oaken door, varnished simply, and hence showing its native grain and color. Painted doors on meeting-houses are like hypocrites. They are nice things to look at; but I know not what is beneath.

All this being now done, my house shall be painted some fine neutral tint, giving to it an air of sobriety, purity, and durability. My house shall not be painted in blocks like stone, oh, how I detest such hypocrisy; nor yet in garish white, or scandalous red—not a bit of it. In a word, my house shall stand, in external appearance, severely simple, and in proportions most just, the whole wearing a sober, modest air, with just a little tinge of melancholy playing like a magic spell over the entire fabric.

Such without shall be my house. To the worldly passer-by or flippant belle, this house will not be likely to present many inducements to enter. Such people, like things with wings, prefer to buzz 'round steeples, or nod where the luxurious notes of some great organ tempt to repose. But should a highly cultured and truly sober man pass this way, he will at once pause before my house, and, folding his arms as if in deep study, he will inspect it closely. Being through, he will be heard to say half inaudibly:

"At first I was not struck with that house, but on closer inspection there is something marvelously beautiful there. I cannot resist the inclination to go in."

But hold, gentle reader, we are not ready yet to enter my house!

There are those grounds to which I must next invite your attention. My house is to stand sixty-five feet back from the street, in the middle of a lot a hundred feet wide by two hundred long. This lot is to be enclosed by a fence of wood, heavy and simple, but exceedingly neat—the whole painted the same color of the house. My gate is to be sufficiently heavy but not too large, with all its hinges, screws, latches, locks, and springs perfect. Not a pencil mark shall be seen on that gate, nor the scar of a ruffian's knife on all that fence. The ground of my lot is to be nearly level, and finely turfed in bluegrass. This shall be kept smoothly and closely

cut; and not a straw, nor a particle of litter shall be allowed to lie upon it. It is always to be kept so clean and neat that the conclusion cannot be resisted that this is the identical grass which grew in Paradise.

Here and there in my lot is to grow a flowering shrub, kept neatly trimmed, and standing in the center of a little circle two feet in diameter, from which the turf is to be removed, and where nothing else is to be allowed to grow. Nothing can be more agreeable to the eye than this fresh little circle of earth, with its fringe of grass and modest shrub. But the chief ornament in my lot, in the way of flowers, is to be the rose—that sad sweet relic of Eden. The stems are to stand tucked up to a wooden frame, with leather straps and tacks in their ends, like virtuous country wives sometimes tuck them up to the cheek of their cabin doors. I have often seen them there, and wondered how sin could ever enter that honest abode guarded by such a sentinel.

As for shade trees for a church yard, reader, I have a fancy of my own, as you will see. I like the aristocratic oak—emblem of strength, the chaste ash, the mournful elm, and the plain rustic walnut. These are my choice, and with them my lot shall be adorned. I do not like the cottonwood; it looks to me like a flirt. As for the sycamore it is a *methodistic* tree, big, pretentious, seldom sound, frequently hollow, a tree for woodcocks and old owls;

and then vulgar legends have it that spooks affect to brood on those naked, airy limbs. I do not like the tree.

From the street to the door of my church is to be a broad flagging of stone cut smooth on the upper face, and fitting each other closely. All along on each side of this flagging are to be large scrapers for the feet—a hint which I am persuaded will work like a charm; for not a footprint is to be seen on all that clean grass. Such shall be my church yard.

I am now prepared, reader, to enter my church and acquaint you with the manner in which I am going to fit it up and furnish it. On opening the large front door we find ourselves, as you see, in the *first room or entrance.* I do not like vestibule; neighbor Smith stares at me when I use it, and calls it a "big word." This room serves to shut out the confusion of the street from the main room of my church. It is to be well provided with racks for wet cloaks and umbrellas, and with mats and rugs for cleaning the feet.

Passing now through another door we enter the church-room proper. The floor of this is first to be covered with heavy matting. Then over this is to lie a compact carpet of fine fabric, neat design, and grave fast color. By this means all noise of feet will be absorbed, and the room will wear a quiet air. A church-room, even when there is passing about in it, should be hushed and silent. Nothing is

more disagreeable to a person in a thoughtful, meditative mood than the shuffling of feet, and the cracking of boot heels. None but vulgar people ever walks heavy or makes a noise in church.

My seats are to be of oak and heavy, with the natural color of the wood preserved. The bottoms are to be broad and deep, the backs of the proper height and standing at the easiest angle. Both backs and bottoms are to be well cushioned. Plethoric wool-sacks I like the best. So that a stranger on sitting down and gliding back into one of these deep, soft seats, will draw his coat around him, look askance at his friend and say, *this is all right.* But now, reader, you are beginning to demur. I insist, however, on having my way. When I sit down in a church and am bored by a bad speech, I feel it to be but a poor compensation that I am provided with a good seat. If I am listening to a fine thing I hate to be fidgeting about on a hard board in quest of a soft place. I still insist on my seats. All along the outer backs of my seats neat leather pockets are to be tacked at proper intervals. Each pocket is to contain a Bible and a hymn book.

My house is to be provided with no spittoons, for I detest filthiness in the house of God. If furnished with anything, it shall be with a few *troughs,* for although swine take no hints, men do.

My pulpit is to be of substantial oak like my seats, of chaste design but plain, of ample size and moderate height. It is to be furnished with a plain

Bible, and a plain hymn book. I do not like gilt and clasps on Bibles. Clasps especially I dislike. They are a species of hieroglyph the meaning of which is, *what I shut open not thou.* They originated with the Mother of harlots.

My windows are to be tall and not very wide; the sash hung with weights, and glass transparent. I love the pure, glorious light of heaven; and when I see it struggling through stained glass into a church, it reminds me of the pure Gospel struggling through sectarianism into the hearts of the people. My glass shall not be stained. My windows are all to have neat folding shutters, but these are to be hung on the inside, and not the outside, of the house. The wood of both windows and shutters is to be oak to correspond with the rest of my house.

The walls and ceiling of my church are to be finished hard, in proper plaster. This done, I then intend to employ some fine artist, Hogarth or Vandyke, to paint them. I shall point him to those long, blank, expressionless intervals between window and window and between base and ceiling. These, sir, I shall say to him, I wish you to cover after the best fashion of your art. The persons and scenes with which I want these walls adorned I will furnish you myself from one of the books you see in these pockets. But my walls, let me fancy, are now done, exquisitely done, to the delight of every eye, and the more cultivated the eye the deeper the delight. These walls now teem with sublime sense; the

Bible has furnished the thought, and genius has fixed it there. They are a study to the Christian, a study to the stranger; and in Sunday school I teach my children many a lesson from them. But you are murmuring again, reader, and counting the cost of this. Be still, I beseech you, till my work is done.

Not a stove is to stand in my house. Such huge iron fixtures, with their crooked, rust-eaten pipes angling through the house, are fit to be seen no where except in houses of hard-shell Baptists, or predestinated Presbyterians. My house is to be heated by a furnace from beneath. It is to be splendidly lighted up, the whole looking like an enchanted place.

A very amiable Episcopalian lady has just suggested that nothing would add so much to the style of my house as a fine organ. She declares that it is known to her experimentally, that is to say, she has been so assured by the *mediums*, that God is delighted most of all with that music which is thumped out of melodeons or ground out of organs. I agreed with her at once, but on thoughtlessly suggesting that a conch would greatly add to the bass, she fainted. Otherwise I really believe that the result would have been an organ for my house.

Dr. Tidymus has also just called on me to insist that my house will be utterly incomplete without a baptistry. I agreed with the Doctor, and added that, besides, I could make a baptistry a source of revenue to the church by using it as a pond in which

to breed fishes for Jews, and frogs for Frenchmen. This he took in high dudgeon and left muttering something about ill-breeding or the like.

Give me the fluent stream, the deep, clear pool embowered in trees when I have to immerse. I love a secluded spot away from the buzz of the city, the dust of the street, and the vulgar gaze of profane crowds. There let me meet a few choice spirits—brethren and sisters in Christ, where all is solemnity, and where all can sing and weep, and enjoy the scene to our hearts' content.

Well, reader, I have at last completed my house. Now that it is done, how sensibly do I feel that it is all of the earth earthly. Having now finished it, I am at a loss to know how best to dispose of it. Upon the whole I have decided to make a present of it to a congregation of Christians who live in the city where I have built it, but who as yet have no house of worship to meet in. These Christians are a peculiar people, being zealous of good works. They refuse to be known by any other names than those worn by the primitive Christians; and, strange as it may appear to you, they have no creed but the Bible. They seem to me a right worthy people, and I shall make them a present of my house.

Having now enjoyed, gentle reader, an opportunity of meeting for several successive weeks with the congregation to whom I presented my church, and having by inquiry, and personal intercourse made myself pretty well acquainted with them, I propose

to give you some account of this rather remarkable, if not singular, people.

The congregation numbers in all *fifty*. Their personal appearance on entering the church at first struck me as a little odd. They all dress most noticeably plain. I do not mean that either the men or women have any uniform fashion, nor that all of either sex dress in the same kind of goods. I mean strictly that they dress very plain. The material in which the men dress, although remarkably neat, and faultlessly clean, I take to be quite cheap. I should think none of it cost over a dollar a yard. Their clothes are made in the very best style, and worn with exquisite taste. The men remind me of certain specimens of ancient statuary. There is not a garment with which you can dispense with propriety, and yet there is precisely enough. The whole sits so becomingly and easily on the person that although you cannot exactly say it is fine, yet for your life you cannot make an alteration without impairing the symmetry of the whole.

All that is here said, and I make the remark in high praise, is equally true of the women. One thing among the females struck me with peculiar force—not one has her ears pierced, and they wear no jewelry. I have not seen a single ear pendant, wristlet, or ring, nor among the men so much as a breastpin or watch-seal. I learn that they have these things at home, and wear them on ordinary occasions, but never in the house of God. In that holy

place, they say, all should appear in a style remarkably plain, neat, and pure. I think I have never seen a worshiping assembly exhibit, in its outward appearance, so little of earth as this. Being curious to have a reason for it, as I took for granted they had one, I one day approached one of the overseers of the congregation and asked him why his brethren dressed thus. He blushed and modestly replied:

"Friend, your question is legitimate, but it elicits from me a rather painful answer. There are many poor in our community who cannot afford to dress better than you see us dressed. They would feel pained by a difference in dress which should constantly remind them of this circumstance. Some of these are here today and are members of our body, but you cannot distinguish them. These brethren are very dear to us and we are unwilling to hurt their feelings by dressing better than you see us dressed. Besides, we think it right in us to appear thus in the presence of God. We hence have a double pleasure in it."

I turned away from this good man saying in my heart, these are Christians indeed, and hence know how to "condescend to men of low estate."

When assembled in their house I notice that the males and females do not sit together. The fathers take the little boys, the mothers the little girls. I greatly admired this plan, and think the only reason that can be assigned for a promiscuous sitting is one either of sensuality or pride. The house of

God is not the place for men and women to sit touching each other. There is another thing I deem worthy of remark in the sittings of this congregation. The members never change their seats. Hence, when a member is absent his seat is vacant. I learn that the congregation makes commendable use of this arrangement. Whenever a seat is vacant it is at once inferred that something is wrong, either that sickness or misfortune has overtaken the missing member. Inquiry is immediately made, and if anything has happened calling for aid it is promptly extended. An incident occurred a few meetings ago illustrating the advantages of this excellent plan, which I think it worth while to relate.

The seat of a poor but faithful brother was vacant. His little daughter, however, was present, and was occasionally seen to weep. An aged sister approached her and asked the cause. The artless child replied:

"Last night our house was burned and everything in it. When I left home poor Ma was weeping, and oh, it hurts me so much."

This aged sister walked forward to the preacher and made the tragedy known. He at once arose and announced it to the congregation, simply adding, "help, brethren, look not every man on his own things but also on the things of others." The whole congregation simultaneously arose and rushed to the stand in front of the pulpit. Two thousand dollars was raised on the spot, and I declare I believe if ten

had been needed it would have been raised. I never saw anything like it. Each member seemed to fear that a chance would not be afforded him of doing what he wished. The next morning the whole congregation was on the spot of that ruined home. A new house arose, as if by enchantment, out of those ashes. Furniture, beds, clothing, all came back as if by magic. By the next Lord's day the only remaining trace of that burnt house was that a better one stood in its stead.

The manner in which this incident was spoken of in the community gave great offense to members of other churches in town. Men of the world declared outright that this was the only truly Christian church in the place, that they would not give a pinch of snuff for all the other cold, niggardly things in town, and that if they ever joined any congregation at all, it would be the one meeting at *Bethel,* for this is now the name by which my house is known.

Again, I think I notice something very peculiar in the *greetings* of these people on coming into their house. They grasp each other by the hand so quick and strong, and give each other a look so cordial, sweet, and kind, that I declare it is worth while attending their church merely to see them meet. Nor can I detect in their intercourse even the slightest approach to vulgar familiarity. They evidently know how to be courteous, and not only so, they certainly love each other most tenderly. The warm, virtuous look of the eye, the amiable unsinister smile,

together with a mannerism indescribably witching, most clearly evince this. I am in the habit of attending church at several other places besides this, but no where else do I see anything even approaching what I witness here. These meetings affect me much. My feelings are often deeply moved, and for the life of me I cannot tell why. Everybody seems delighted to attend the place. The very atmosphere you breathe seems quick with divine life. The attraction to be here is irresistible, and then you linger on the spot as if held in some strange spell.

In their order of worship several things strike me as noteworthy. In their singing, which I pronounce excellent, I discover they prefer the older type of tunes. "*Old Hundred,*" for instance, seems a favorite with them, and in almost all their Lord's day meetings I notice they sing

"Safely through another week."

They seem, too, to be much attached to that fine old piece,

"O, thou Fount of every blessing."

In all this I must confess, I think their taste excellent. Those grand old airs are the very melody of the soul, and those matchless hymns the very utterances of the pious heart. They all sing sitting.

But when the Holy Scriptures are to be read they all arise, and stand listening in profoundest reverence. While the reading is proceeding each member holds in front an open Bible, looking on. This done,

they all resume their seats. They stand, they tell me, as a token of respect for the holy word of God. I could wish the custom universal provided it prevailed through real respect for the Bible and not as a mere form.

Their prayers, in some respects, are remarkable. Every member in the church takes part in them when called upon. They are very free from all conventional forms, and studied phrases. They seem to be more a simple confiding talk with God than anything else. Yet to me there is something grand in those simple measured petitions. They often become deeply affecting. While listening to one the other day I felt as if my heart would break. Determining, if possible, to discover in what this secret power lay, I resolved to jot down one of these prayers and study it. I here transcribe it:

"All-merciful Father, Thy little flock, still helpless and poor, are in Thy presence again. In the name of our blessed Mediator we come, and since unworthy, in deep humility. Turn not Thy face away from us when we cry to Thee. Hear us in Thy clemency; and when Thou hearest, forgive. We have all been kept through another week, have had our bread and clothing from Thee. Accept our humble thanks for these Thy favors. Teach us to be always grateful, and help us in all our ways to acknowledge Thee. Keep us in safety through another week. Suffer us not to be tempted. Save our eyes from tears and our feet from wandering. Remember, Lord,

especially remember our brother Lamb who lies so sick today. His life is in Thy hand; may it be Thy will to spare him. Pity his anxious wife, pity his helpless little ones; and restore to us our brother again. O! hear us in his behalf. But in all things Thy will be done. Amen."

When I arose I had a secret impression in my heart that God would hear that prayer and spare that man. How this may turn out I cannot tell, but such impressions do me good, and I like to have them. Now in the foregoing prayer there is certainly nothing great or very striking. Indeed, to many it is difficult to see in what its power lies. Ah! my friend, its power lies in this, that it was uttered from a pure heart that felt every syllable of it. This is the secret.

Now how striking the contrast between the simple scene I have just been describing, and what I witnessed at Trinity church last week. The Rev. Dr. Specks gave out the week previous that he would deliver a discourse on *"The essence of the Logos as psychologically concepted ev apyn."* The flock ventured to predict that the discourse would never be excelled. I was curious to hear it, and so attended. Although service was announced for 10:30, the Reverend Doctor did not enter until 10:35. He entered wearing a long black gown and carrying a very small gold-headed cane. One hand was covered with jetty kid, the other was naked and fair as a maid's hand. His step was courtly, his look heavenly. He

walked forward to the first step of the pulpit; and there dropped on his knees, but said not a word. I shuddered, and was seized with a vulgar fear that he was a "consulter of familiar spirits," "a practicer of arts inhibited and out of warrant."

I was just in the act of leaving in great trepidation, fearing that I might be spelled, when one of his flock, observing my alarm, whispered: "he is wrestling with God in prayer." This gave me instant relief; I at once became composed, and heard the discourse to its end. It was thirty-two minutes and nine seconds long. During the last part of the discourse the Reverend Doctor became very much excited; so much so, that he unconsciously stepped out of the pulpit, and walked half way down the aisle exhorting all the time. Suddenly he fell on his knees saying: "let us silently pray." I kneeled, but just as my soul was becoming absorbed in communion with God, "Amen," screamed the Doctor. I was startled. Though not half through, he informally closed. I retired, but as I was leaving heard a grave looking man muttering something about "insulting heaven" and "enacting farces in the name of religion," but I did not stay to collect particulars.

The preaching at *Bethel* is eminently didactic, that is to say, it is designed to *teach* the people the holy Scriptures. Hence, it generally consists of a very clear, simple exposition of some chapter, paragraph, or verse. On leaving the church you seldom hear the common question: "How did you like the

sermon?'' On the contrary, the remark you generally hear is, ''I never understood that passage so well before.'' Indeed, it is a common saying that if you want to hear something nice, go either to Trinity, or Grace Chapel, but if you want to hear the truth, go to *Bethel.* The discourse being over a hymn is sung, which closes this part of the services of the day.

The next thing in order is the supper. A table is now prepared extending entirely across the house, and covered with a clean white linen. On one end of this, near the preacher, stands the loaf and cup, the latter being in all cases the pure juice of the grape. A simple thanks is offered for the loaf when it is distributed, all partaking of it standing. Next the wine is disposed of in the same way.

I was curious to have a reason for this part of their practice, remonstrating at the same time against their attitude, and their long unwieldy table. They told me that as no position was prescribed in the *New Testament,* they regarded the matter as left entirely to their own choice; that they preferred standing merely because they thought it the most reverential attitude. They added, however, that as neither this, nor their table, was a question settled by the Bible, it was no matter of conscience with them, that if a better course were pointed out they were quite ready to adopt it. Or if any member's feelings should be hurt with either, they should certainly abandon it. This indicated a spirit

so tractable and so nonproscriptive as to command my cordial praise, and to make me regret that I had ever named their standing or their table. Thus should all questions unsettled by the Bible, be viewed and treated by Christians.

In the evening the congregation again meets, but their time is now spent in reviewing the chapter commented on in the forenoon. Their intercourse is very free, all taking part in it. They evince a wonderful skill in eliciting the meaning of a passage. I was really surprised at the depth of their penetration, their powers of analysis, and their seeming intuitive perception of divine truth. I attributed it all, however, to the fact that their minds are kept in constant contact with the word of God, which must in all cases, give precision as well as reach to thought.

The public services of the church now usually close; and the members return home to spend the rest of the day in reading, meditation, and prayer. I was remarkably struck with one peculiarity in their private dwellings; *every house had a closet for prayer.* I have never seen anything of the kind elsewhere. I am told that every member of the family, at some hour of the day, repairs to this closet for secret prayer. Here fathers take their little sons, and, making them kneel in their presence, put their hands on their little heads, and implore the blessings of God upon them. The mothers especially are said to do this. And certainly I never saw so pious

and so well-behaved a set of children as these Christians have. They are never seen gadding about the streets on Sunday, or strolling up and down creeks fishing. The children seem so intelligent and kind, that their parents are never so happy as when at home in their society. *I wish it were so everywhere.*

These Christians evince the greatest solicitude for the salvation of their neighbors, often urging upon them privately, in meetings sought for that very purpose, the necessity of becoming obedient to Christ; but if possible, still greater solicitude for the safety of those who have united with them. A few weeks since a man united with the congregation, who was notoriously covetous. The day after he was baptized the Elders visited him, when the following occurred:

"We visit you today, dear brother, for the purpose of a confidential talk. You are now one of us, dear to us as our own flesh, and we greatly long after the prosperity of your soul. The sin we come to warn you against is covetousness. You have the reputation in this community of being a very covetous man; and we have reason to think you are not wholly undeserving the charge. Remember, if you persist in this sin it will ruin your soul. Remember, further, that our congregation has not joined you, but you have joined it. It hence has claims not only upon you but upon all you have. We shall expect from you many a proof in the way of liberality that

you are deeply penitent for the past, and that you are now wholly consecrated to Christ."

All this was said in a most affectionate spirit, and with deep emotion. The only reply the man made was, "brethren kneel and pray for me." They all kneeled and prayed and wept together. On arising the man added:

"Brethren, you are true men. Nothing but a sense of duty could have prompted this. I thank you for it. But in time past I have sinned and greatly perverted myself. I am young in the cause, and my past life may sometimes have the effect to obscure my judgment and prevent my doing right. Will you counsel me, brethren, and tell me what I ought to do, and with the Lord's help I will do it."

They said "we will," and grasped his hand and fell on his neck and wept. That man seems effectually cured; he even thinks the church most mild in its demands upon his liberality.

Thus is every member dealt with that enters their congregation. Right off they attack his sins, be they what they may, and never desist until they have either cured him or put him away. They will not endure them that are evil. The reputation, consequently, of the congregation in the community where it meets is most salutary. Its power for good is truly wonderful. It seems destined to effect a complete revolution in its vicinity. True, the other churches of the place effect to treat it with great scorn, pronouncing it not orthodox and the like; but

nevertheless it is very evident that it controls, notwithstanding, the best minds and the best hearts in the town. How it should exert such an influence is a complete enigma to partisans, but to no one else. Its power is easily accounted for.

Never have I known a church evince so much regard for a preacher; and never have I known a preacher so much attached to a church. The relation between them seems indissoluble. They love their preacher because he is a good man; and he loves them because they are a pious people. True, he is not a man of great talents, but they say he understands the Book and can teach that, and that the greatest genius could do no more. Several very brilliant preachers have visited them at different times, and greatly charmed them with the splendors of their eloquence; but they have uniformly refused to abandon their old and faithful servant. He tells me they are the most considerate people he has ever known; that he has been living with them ten years, and never once during that time has had to name to them his wants; that they anticipate him and pay, as a general rule, even more than they agreed to pay. He says it is a matter of wonder that they should raise his salary so quietly and pay it over so promptly, and withal so delicately. He declares that the manner of his brethren in these matters is more grateful to his feelings than all they do besides.

The congregation suffers no one of its members to be in debt. Not for a moment will they allow

the apostle's injunction, "owe no man anything," to be disregarded. They will put away a member just as quickly for breaking this precept as for adultery. They say they know no distinction among the commands of God; that they are all alike important to them, and that if a thing be enjoined in the word of God, that is enough for them; that they then resolutely require all their members to comply with it. They consider the disregard of the foregoing precept by sister churches to be productive of incalculable mischief. It is much to be regretted that their example is not universally followed.

If a member of the congregation happens to visit a ball or dance, he or she is not even so much as called upon for an apology. The church takes for granted, *and this is well known to all the members,* that its yoke has become burdensome, and quietly proceeds to remove it. Such is the promptness of the church to act in this and all other cases, and such the majesty of its calm, affectionate manner, that every act of the kind named is effectually prevented. They have had only two cases to occur in ten years; and these by the course just named were completely cured and reclaimed. The parties never ventured on a second offense.

Again, in their intercourse one with another and with the world, there is another rule from which they resolutely refuse to swerve. *In all things they do to others as they would that others should do to them.* They tell me they never suffer themselves

even for a moment to disregard it. They train themselves to it, and strengthen themselves for it, and hence find it most easy to practice. They say that the pleasure arising from scrupulously living up to this rule is one of the most distinct and peculiar belonging to the Christian life. They seem to be at an utter loss to understand how professors can so far forget their best interests and their truest happiness, as to neglect the rule. In the correctness of this judgment, I must confess I feel myself obliged to concur.

But, my dear friend, though I delight to linger over the lineaments of this church, yet must I bring this to a close. How long, O! how long, before the religious world will become in spirit and in deed what the Master intended it to be?

HAVE WE OUTGROWN OUR PLEA?

By Z. T. SWEENEY

THE title raises two questions: First, What is our plea? Second, Have we outgrown it?

By way of general definition, I will say that our plea is an appeal to the Christian world for the restoration of everything that is essential and universal in *New Testament Christianity*. This plea did not originate with us. It was born in the brain of Ulric Zwingle, the reformer of the sixteenth century.

You are all familiar with the controversy that raged for years between Luther and Zwingle. The former said: "We will keep in the church all that is not contradicted by Scripture." The latter said: "We will put out of the church all that is not taught in Scripture." Unfortunately for Protestantism, the view of Luther prevailed, and a whole lot of evils were kept in the church to plague, perplex and paralyze Protestantism till now. Had the view of Zwingle prevailed, the Reformation of the sixteenth century would have been a restoration of the divine teaching instead of an abortive attempt at reforma-

tion of an apostate church, and Protestantism would have been centuries in advance of what it is to-day. Tennyson puts it in a stanza:

"Step by step with voices crying right and left,
I have climbed my way back to the primal church
and stand within the porch, and Christ is with me."

The men who laid the foundation for this plea in the United States were *all Presbyterian clergymen,* scholarly, wise and far-seeing. Moreover, they were aflame with a passion for the unity of all Christians. They realized that Christendom could never be united upon the peculiarities of any one sect or denomination. Only that which is *essential* and *universal* in Christianity could be made the basis of Christian unity. They carefully sifted out that which was peculiar and partial, and selected that which was essential and universal. That they succeeded in this effort is demonstrated by the fact *that there is nothing in our plea that is not recognized by all evangelical Christians as Scriptural and right.* This may sound arrogant and bigoted to some, but it *is true nevertheless,* and truth is never arrogant nor bigoted. The differences between us and other religious communions are not over what *we* teach and practice, but over what *they* teach and practice. I have heard sermons from our own preachers upon "Our Peculiarities." Such preachers fail to catch the significance of our plea. We have but *one peculiarity,* and that lies in the fact that *we have no peculiarities.* We eschew peculiarities and stand

only for what is *universal in Christianity*. This will appear as we proceed.

Our plea naturally divides itself into, first, our creed; second, our practice.

I. What is our creed? The apostle Peter, in the opening sentence of his second Epistle, addresses it, "to them that have obtained like precious faith with us." In his day the faith of one Christian was like the faith of every other Christian. Not so to-day. That "like precious faith" was like Peter's. If we can learn what was Peter's faith, we can know the faith of all. Peter makes a confession of his faith to the Lord at Cæsarea Philippi in the following words: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Christ blessed Peter and told him, "Upon this rock I will build my church." *This is our creed.*

Let us analyze this creed. We will begin at its close and work backward. It contains five articles; viz., (1) God; (2) the living God; (3) the Son of the living God; (4) the Christ, the Son of the living God, and (5) Jesus of Nazareth is that Christ.

God never vindicated His wisdom more signally than when He put the creed of Christianity into these simple propositions. *The first* lays the ax at the root of all idolatry. It emptied the Pantheon once, and will expel all idols wherever it prevails. *The second* kills all ancient Pantheism and also all modern Pantheism that prates so constantly of the "immanence of God" in the universe. All this talk

about the "immanence of God" is an attempt to destroy the idea of a personal God outside of nature and ruling over it, and reduce God to an impersonal principle, similar to the law of gravitation. You can conceive of a man in the image of a personal God, but how can you conceive of a man in the image of the law of gravitation?

The third article destroys all Unitarianism and puts Christ into His proper place as the "only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," and containing within Himself "the fulness of the Godhead bodily." *The fourth* declares this Son of the living God to be the Messiah of the prophets. He is not merely *a* Christ, for there have been many Christs—every prophet, priest and king was *a* Christ —but He is *the* Christ, embodying in Himself the three offices of prophet, priest and king, the only such being in all human history. *The fifth* article declares that Jesus of Nazareth is that Messiah.

There is not an article in that creed that is not essential to Christianity. Moreover, it is the universal faith of all evangelical Christians. *Our creed, therefore, is universal.* "Well," says one, "is that all?" Yes, that is all—absolutely and unqualifiedly all that a man must believe to be a Christian. "Can't a man believe more than that?" Of course he can; we all believe more than that. A man can believe anything he pleases that is in harmony with that creed. The Gospel is powerful enough to save a man that believes a whole lot of tomfoolery, pro-

vided he believes the above creed, but he is *not required* to believe anything more to be a Christian.

"Will that creed keep out hypocrites?" No. You can't keep a hypocrite out of the church by any sort of a creed. He will swallow any creed you make and be sorry you don't make more. His swallowing capacity is far greater than your creed-making ability. You can, however, keep an honest man out when you require more than you are authorized to require.

"Oh," says one, "we all believe that, but some of us think we should require more." There begins trouble. When you require more, you produce division and sectarianism.

An Irishman was once giving testimony in court. When he finished, the judge said: "Pat, have you told the truth and the whole truth?" He replied: "Yes, your Honor; and a good deal more." That "more" causes the trouble.

As illustrative of this, a story is told of a man in southern Indiana, who lived in the neighborhood of a strong congregation of Christians, who had added to the above creed a plank that required every man who came into the church to relate a "Christian experience," and have it voted on before he was admitted. This man had no "Christian experience" and was therefore ineligible. He wanted to go into the church with his family and friends, and he finally concluded he would make up an experience,

copying after some he had heard. He finally "cooked up" an "experience of grace," and it was voted upon as sound and acceptable, and he was admitted. He was an honest man and it lay heavily upon his conscience. One Sunday morning he rose and told the church that he had made up a good deal of his experience out of his imagination, and he was sorry for it and asked the church to forgive him. They took it in high dudgeon and a motion was made and carried to expel him from the church. They took him in for *telling a falsehood* and turned him out for *telling the truth.* This incident illustrates the difficulties in the pathway of a church that requires a "good deal more" than Christ requires.

II. What is our practice? In the short space allotted me, I have only time to hint at a few of the important details in our practice:

(1) We call Bible things by Bible names. We call the church by its names in the *New Testament.* We call the members by *New Testament* names. We especially call ourselves Christians. Is there anything peculiar in that? Is not the name "Christian" worn by all who profess the religion of Christ? "Oh," says one, "we all claim to be Christians, but some of us wear human names." Well, those names are peculiar, but they are your peculiarity and not ours; our name is universal.

(2) We baptize believers in Christ. Is there anything peculiar in that? Don't all churches baptize believers? "But we baptize infants also."

Well, that is peculiar, but it is your peculiarity. Our practice is universal.

(3) We practice immersion for baptism. Is there anything peculiar in that? Don't all churches recognize immersion as valid baptism? "We practice immersion and also pouring and sprinkling." Here, again, you are peculiar while our practice is universal.

(4) We meet on the first day of the week to break bread. Is there any church that will deny that is right? "We think that is too often, and so practice monthly, quarterly or yearly communion." That, again, is peculiar, but it is your peculiarity. All agree that if any church desires to practice weekly communion it is in harmony with the will of God.

(5) We require Christians to form their character according to the ethics of Christ. The great laws of self-sacrifice and self-denial and altruism taught by Him are to form the warp and woof of Christian character; Christ must be formed "in us the hope of glory."

(6) We require all members of Christ's body to live a life of holiness and peace, to walk in the footsteps and teachings of the Master, to grow up in the divine life "unto him who is the head in all things," to "do good unto all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith."

(7) We present to the Christian world a platform of unity found in the fourth chapter of Ephe-

sians in the following words: "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

(8) We require all who come into the church to co-operate as they are able in carrying out the command of Jesus to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Is there anything peculiar in that? Do not all churches require the same?

Now, I have given as briefly as I can our practice, and I defy you to show that there is anything peculiar in it. It is the universal practice of all evangelical Christians, and entirely unsectarian.

III. We are now ready to answer the second question; viz., Have we outgrown our plea? To outgrow it, we must outgrow our creed. Have we done that? If so, we have outgrown (1) God; (2) the living God; (3) the Son of the living God; (4) the Christ, the Son of the living God, and (5) Jesus of Nazareth. If we have outgrown these things, we have outgrown Christianity and should no longer profess it.

Second, have we outgrown the ethics of Christ? Have we outgrown the Sermon on the Mount and the Golden Rule? I would walk across this continent to see a man who can truthfully say "I have outgrown the ethics of Christ and am ready for something better." You will not find such a one, and

least of all will you find him in the ranks of those who think they have outgrown our plea. The world has been busy of late adding to its stock of knowledge. It is estimated that the nineteenth century added more to the world's stock of knowledge than all the previous centuries of the race. When our Constitution was written, the archives of all European Governments were ransacked to learn their treasures of liberty, fraternity and equality. Our fathers thought they had it well-nigh perfect. Mr. Gladstone said it was the greatest human document ever struck off at a single time. But in a little over a century we have added nineteen amendments to it, and have a half-dozen others knocking for admission. No one has added a single amendment to the ethics of Jesus Christ. No one has convicted Him of being at war with a well-known ethical principle.

Third, have we outgrown the Christian life? Have we outgrown the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians? Show me the full moons of Christian love that say "I have absorbed all the love of the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians and need another standard of love." Have we outgrown the twelfth chapter of Romans? It is a practical application to human conduct of the general principles of love found in I Cor. 13. I unhesitatingly affirm that the twelfth chapter of Romans contains a perfect rule of conduct for all ages. Have we outgrown the first chapter of II Peter, which contains

a stairway of growth, beginning with faith and adding, step by step, courage, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity?

Fourth, have we outgrown our platform for the unity of Christians based upon one body, animated by one spirit, cherishing one hope, looking to one Lord by one faith, practicing one baptism and bowing before the altar of one God in worship? I aver that this is the only practical plan in the world to-day for the unity of God's people. All others are mere compromises. Men are so busy to-day formulating plans for Christian unity, that they overlook the fact that God has laid a foundation for Christian unity that is perfect and practical.

Fifth, have we outgrown the Lord's program for the world's conversion? Have we gone into all the world and preached the Gospel to every creature? Not half the world has ever heard the name of Christ. We have not begun to carry out this program. After nearly two thousand years of teaching and working, we have not only failed to convert the world, but truth and candor compel me to say that the world is not even in the process of being converted. I would not make such a statement unless it were supported by facts. What are the facts? In the first decade of the twentieth century, the United States statistics revealed the fact that the church barely held its own, having a 10 per cent increase against a 10 per cent increase in population.

In England it did not hold its own, while, in the heathen countries, for every heathen converted a hundred heathens are born. How long will it take to convert the world at such a rate of progress? "Well," says one, "what then, Is the world never to be converted? Have all the beautiful visions of the prophets proven to be disordered fancies? Has the Sun of righteousness risen upon the world in glory only to set behind clouds of disaster and defeat? Is it all a failure?"

No! a thousand times no! That is not the answer to the question, "What then?" But there is an answer to that question so pregnant with meaning that it should be pondered by every lover of Christ. The experience of nineteen centuries teaches us one great lesson; viz., *a sectarian presentation of Christianity will never convert a heathen world.*

John R. Mott said in the great Edinburgh Conference on Missions: "We are defeated before we begin, by our divisions!"

Pangiri Bey, private secretary to Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan, once said to me:

"Excellence! Christianity can never hope to conquer Islamism till your missionaries can agree upon what Christianity is."

They both spoke the truth. The foundation of our plea is to call the Christian world away from philosophic subtleties and doctrinal peculiarities to what is essential and universal in Christianity. The Christian world owes it to God, to itself and to an

unbelieving world to get down upon its knees and pray and study till it finds what is essential and universal in Christianity, and with united voice present that and only that, to the heathen. The Gospel is still the power of God unto salvation. When properly presented and believed, it can save, and will save, every man on the face of the earth. But, diluted with human teaching and emasculated by philosophic subtlety, it loses its saving power.

"Well," says one, "why all this talk of some among us about outgrowing our plea?" I once heard of a sailor who was placed at the wheel, and shown the North Star and told to steer the vessel toward it. He got to looking around among the stars till he lost the North Star and wabbled around until he was sailing south. The captain came upon deck, and, seeing the departure, he pointed to the pole star and said: "I told you to sail for that, and you are going directly away from it." The sailor replied: "Captain, I passed that star an hour ago." He had simply turned his back upon it. That is precisely the way some have outgrown the plea. They have turned their back upon it.

In conclusion, let us examine the claims of some who profess to have outgrown the plea. Prominent among these is former president Charles W. Eliot of Harvard University. He claims the world has outgrown Christianity, and has presented to the world what he calls "the religion of the twentieth cen-

tury." It is full of good and original sayings, but, unfortunately for him, the *good* sayings are not *original,* and the *original* sayings are not *good.* Let us notice some of them:

(1) "The new religion will laud God's love and teach that he is best who loves best and serves best." That is exactly the teaching of the apostle Paul, who says that "love is the fulfilling of the law" and "the end of the commandment is love," and the Master's statement: "He that would be great among you, let him be your servant."

(2) "The new religion will not teach condemnation for the mass of mankind." Neither does *New Testament Christianity.* Its first pronouncement is, "Fear not: behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." It is saturated with salvation for all and only throws out the red light of warning to the wilfully disobedient.

(3) "Its priests will strive to improve social and industrial conditions." No statement of *New Testament Christianity* could be truer. The world to-day stands graded in social and industrial progress precisely in the ratio that it has accepted *New Testament Christianity.* Where do we find the greatest social and industrial advancement?

(*a*) In the Anglo-Saxon-speaking, Protestant countries; (*b*) in the non-English-speaking, Protestant countries; (*c*) in the Catholic countries; (*d*) in the Mohammedan countries, and (*e*) in the pagan or idolatrous countries.

That classification is perfect. There is not an exception to it on God's green earth. That is precisely the ratio that Christianity has leavened the nations.

(4) "The religion of the twentieth century will attack quickly all forms of evil." That is precisely what was done by the *New Testament Christianity*. It made war upon all forms of evil and exhorted its followers to avoid evil of every form.

(5) "The twentieth-century religion will reverence the teaching of liberty and righteousness." That is the very gist of *New Testament* teaching. "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." "Ye have been called unto liberty." "Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, live soberly, righteously and godly." There is nothing new in that statement.

(6) "The new religion of the twentieth century will not be a religion of obscure dogmas and sacraments." I assert that the religion of the *New Testament* is not that. The good Doctor evidently doesn't know the difference between *New Testament Christianity* and the caricatures found in the Romish apostasy.

Thus we find Dr. Eliot borrowing the substance of his new religion from the identical system which he claims to have outgrown. But he has some original statements which differentiate his new religion from that of Christ:

(1) "The new religion will have no authorita-

tive teacher." The *New Testament* church *has* an authoritative teacher. It is the religion of a person. God gave all authority to Jesus Christ, and He gave all authority to His apostles, and they are exercising that authority to-day. *That is a clean-cut difference.* The church of the *New Testament* is governed by the apostles, representing Christ as He represents God. In the new religion of Dr. Eliot every man will "do that which is right in his own eyes."

(2) "There will be no sudden conversions in the new religion." Here, again, the new religion differs squarely from the old. It took the bitter and bigoted Saul and suddenly transformed him into the bond-servant of Jesus Christ. It took the cobbler, William Carey, and transformed him into the pioneer missionary of modern days. It laid hold upon the tipsy tinker, John Bunyan, and transformed him into one of the greatest religious writers of his time. Macaulay says that "English literature of that day produced only two great creative minds—John Milton, author of *Paradise Lost,* and John Bunyan, author of *Pilgrim's Progress.*" It lead the ignorant and indifferent gipsy boy out of his camp and made "Gipsy Smith," the most distinguished herald of the cross on earth today. It took possession of Jerry McAulay and led him to convert his home for gamblers and prostitutes into an ark of salvation for the outcasts of New York. Under its power the debauched father of Florence Crittenden

was lifted up to be one of the philanthropists of the nineteenth century, whose work still lives in the scores of Florence Crittenden homes for unfortunate young girls. Its transforming power is seen on every hand.

Thus all the good sayings of Dr. Eliot are echoes of Christ's teachings, and his original sayings are wrong. Christ furnishes the cream and the Doctor the skim-milk in his new religion.

IV. Mrs. Eddy thought we had outgrown Christianity and so gave to the world *Science and Health*. What has she given us? I will notice only two principles in her teaching: "God is spirit—God is all." If that be true, then "spirit is all." If spirit is all, there is no matter. This Mrs. Eddy boldly affirms. If there is no matter, there can be no material universe and there are no suns, stars or planets. Then, astronomy is all false and should be cast aside. The same reasoning will set aside geology, geography, chemistry and every science that deals with matter. "Down with Science" is the slogan of Christian Science. Again: "God is good—God is all." Therefore all is good. There is no sin. The world needs no Saviour from sin because there is no sin from which we can be saved. Truly that is a marvelous outgrowth of *New Testament* teaching!

V. "The Universal Brotherhood," headed by Mrs. Katharine A. Tingley, claims to have outgrown the teachings of Christ. It has its headquarters at

Pt. Loma, Calif., where the faithful meet in palatial buildings, and go through mysterious rites dressed in cheese-cloth. But it has had its troubles. Only a few years ago the "Universal Brotherhood" was split wide open over the worship of a dog! Mrs. Tingley claimed that her dog was a reincarnation, and that every time he barked he said "brotherhood." Dr. Anderson and his crowd held that the dog was an ornery "fice," and he and his crowd refused to kotow to him as the rest of the faithful did. In the name of common sense, are these the best things that can be presented to Christian America by those who claim to have outgrown the teachings of Jesus?

Now, suppose this plea of ours were carried out. Suppose that every church in Christendom should sit down and look its faith and practice squarely in the face and say, "We propose to eliminate everything from you that is not held as universal and essential in the *New Testament*. We will quit all talk about clerical orders, and authority of officials, not one of whom is even hinted at in the *New Testament* church, and will keep only what is held as the universal faith and practice of the apostolic church." What a revolution would follow! Our missionaries would assail the citadels of heathenism with the cry of the apostle Paul, "I determined to make known nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Behind them would march the cohorts of Christendom singing—truthfully singing:

"Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
Going on before.

"We are not divided,
One great body we;
One in hope and doctrine,
One in charity."

Over such a scene the spirit of God would brood in loving sympathy; God Himself would smile His approval upon it, and the heart of Jesus would leap with new life as He beholds His followers going into battle for the conquest of a lost world under His Lordship and leadership.

The church of God would emerge from the clouds of dissension and strife, that now cover it, "as fair as the moon, as clear as the sun, and as terrible as an army with banners." Heathenism would fall before it and the earth would be "full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the deep." I have given fifty of the best years of my life to the accomplishment of this great end, and if I had a hundred more lives, I would freely give them all to the same cause. Our plea is not outgrown, nor will it be till the "sun is cold and stars are old, and the leaves of the judgment book unfold." I have lived long enough in this world to know that men live and die with their causes. No man is strong enough to attain earthly immortality independent of a great cause. No man is so weak that he can not link him-

self to some great cause and live with it. Will you link your life to a divided Protestantism saturated with humanism, or will you stand for *New Testament Christianity* as revealed by the Holy Spirit through the teaching of the inspired apostles?

"Once to every man and nation
Comes the moment to decide,
In the strife 'twixt truth and falsehood,
For the good or evil side.

"Some great cause God's new Messiah,
Offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand,
And the sheep upon the right.
And this choice goes by forever
'Twixt the darkness and the light."

INAUGURATION OF THE NEW INSTITUTION

By BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

"Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning in Jerusalem."—Luke xxiv:46,47.

THIS Scripture is selected with the intention of discoursing on the beginning of repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ among all nations, or what is the same, the beginning of the reign of Christ, or the inauguration of the new institution. There was a grand change when the law ended and the Gospel commenced; when the Mosaic dispensation terminated and the Christian was introduced; when the work of the mediator of the first covenant closed, and the work of the mediator of the second covenant had culminated in an established institution, fully and completely set in operation.

Some have become weary of discussing such themes, call them "first principles," and say "we must go on to perfection." But there is reason to

question the soundness of any man who talks of "leaving the first principles." The child may learn the English alphabet by the time it is four years of age, but it will never advance so far in literature as to have no use for that alphabet; or it may learn figures by the same period in life, but will never go on to such perfection as not to have use for these numerals. So the faith that first moved the heart of the sinner to turn to the Lord, then comforted the heart of the saint, will be his support when dying. He will never leave faith unless he apostatizes from the Lord. In the same way, we can never leave anything that is truly a principle of the Gospel, but must hold on to the first, middle, and last principle till we die.

Not only so, but there is a rising generation constantly coming on, that have never heard nor understood the first principles of the Gospel, who must be taught from the starting-point, and the principles shown up to them. For the want of this, in many instances, where churches have stood for a long time, and people have grown up without much religious instruction, they have, by personal influence and some warm and affectionate appeals, been brought into the Church not knowing the first principles or any other principles of the Gospel, and without having any love of the truth, or even knowing what it is. There are but few who understand the first principles who do not know all the principles, but it is hard to find one who, knows not the

first principles well, *does not love them;* who knows or loves any of the principles of the Gospel, or respects, adores, or honors Him who gave them. But to the subject in hand.

He who devotes himself to the disastrous work of perverting men, delights in obscuring that which should be clear, in darkening counsel where there should be light, in throwing that into doubt where there should be the full assurance of faith. Hence the efforts to hide from the understandings of men the beginning of the reign of Christ. Such desire no man to have the clear light of the beginning and setting in operation the new Church, with the development of the clear and easy terms of reconciliation. This knowledge is fatal to his work of delusion and deception. One man perverts till he denies that there is any kingdom even yet in existence, and leads others to think that the kingdom has not yet come. Another is busily engaged in maintaining that the kingdom was established in the time of John the Immerser. In one word, in all his machinations, he is satisfied with any way, not only in this matter, but every other, except *the right way.* The right way never suits him. Attention must now be given to these perversions.

1. Is the kingdom now in existence? Is Jesus now King? The main burden of the mission of John the Immerser was to announce that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This, too, was a main item in the preaching of the apostles under the first com-

mission, as also of the seventy. Could it have been proper for them to have preached that the kingdom is at hand, when its establishment was eighteen hundred years off? During this same period He taught them to pray, "Thy kingdom come." The Lord said to them, "Fear not, little flock; it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." "There be some of them standing here who shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." (See Mark ix:1, and Luke ix:27.) Some seek a fulfillment of this in the transfiguration, but the kingdom of heaven did not there "come with power," nor in any other way. To say the most of it, that was no more than a representation of the King in His state of glory, as he now appears in heaven, and not even a *representation* of the kingdom. He unquestionably intended them to understand that, while some of them were yet living, they should see the kingdom come with power. They preached, then, that the kingdom was at hand, prayed for it to come, and had the promise that some of them should see it come with power before they should taste death. This all points to the establishment of the kingdom at an early period.

After the ascension of the Savior, we find not an intimation of any man praying "Thy kingdom come," nor any divine teacher enjoining any such prayer. They continued to preach that "the kingdom is at hand," and to pray for it to come till it did come—till they saw it come with power, but

never preached or prayed so from that time forward.

That the Church and kingdom mean the same, note the following:

"Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." (See Matt. xvi:18,19.) What is the Lord's theme here? Certainly the foundation of the Church, the rock on which Christ will build His Church. "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church," and to you "will I give the keys of the kingdom." Has he changed to another theme? or is not what he calls "my Church" the same as "the kingdom of heaven?" The Church here is unquestionably the same as the kingdom. "Keys," here, symbolize the power to open the Church or kingdom, or, which is the same thing, the terms of pardon; the terms of pardon being the same as the terms of induction into the kingdom. Where was Peter to use these keys? "Whatever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Where is he who has the keys of the kingdom of heaven to do this binding and loosing? "Whatever you shall bind *on earth*"—"whatever you shall loose *on earth*." It is to be done on earth. How is

Peter to use the keys of the kingdom, in binding and loosing, or opening and shutting, *on earth,* if the kingdom itself, the door of which he is to open, is not *on earth?* No man who denies the existence of the kingdom "on earth," in the time of Peter, can tell how this could have been done. But the truth is, the kingdom is the Church, and the keys, the power conferred on Peter by the great Head of the Church, to open the way into the Church, or kingdom, which he did by laying down the terms of salvation.

These things being so, we have the following clear statements in reference to an existing kingdom after Peter had used the keys. Col. i:13, Paul says of the disciples, that they "had been delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son." Could they have been translated into a kingdom that was not in existence? The kingdom had come, as the Lord promised, and in answer to the prayer, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done *on earth,*" and was in existence, and the saints, at Colossee were in the kingdom of God's dear Son. In Paul's letter to the Hebrews, xii:22-28, he speaks of "the church of the first-born" and the "kingdom" as the same, not as something in the future; but says, "You *have come* to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, who are enrolled in heaven"; and further on, he adds: "Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which

can not be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably.'' I Thess. ii:13, Paul said to the saints, ''God has called you into his kingdom and glory.'' Rev. i:9, John speaks of the seven churches in Asia as ''his companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.'' This is enough to show that the kingdom was in existence in the time of the apostles, and the saints had been ''called into it,'' ''received it,'' been ''translated into it,'' and were actually ''in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.'' This must suffice for those who deny the existence of any kingdom on earth at the present.

2. Did the kingdom come in the life-time of the Savior? Was the Gospel fully preached and were any introduced into the kingdom during that period? In these questions will be found the main theme for the present discourse. Several things must be clearly observed here:

1. When the kingdom was founded, the keys of the kingdom were used, the door opened, the Gospel fully preached, and persons introduced into the kingdom.

2. No person can learn the way into the kingdom without hearing the Gospel preached, not in promise, nor in prophecy, but in its completeness as a full revelation.

3. What, then is the Gospel, ''All the preachers claim to preach the Gospel, and how am I to tell which is the Gospel?''

There must, then, be some method by which we

may identify the Gospel, or, at least, we must have some marks without which we can not have the Gospel fully preached. The Bible is not a book of definitions, but it defines some things, and among these the Gospel. I Cor. xv:3,4, Paul says, "For I delivered to you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." This passage develops three things, without which we can not have the Gospel in its full development:

1. It must be preached that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. 2. That He was buried. 3. That He rose from the dead according to the Scriptures.

Whatever may be required more, these central fundamental items must exist in the Gospel. Any thing claiming to be the Gospel without these items would be utterly empty. To these items, two more must be added. That Jesus shed His blood for many for the remission of sins, must as certainly be found in it as that the Lord Jesus is divine. The office and work of the Holy Spirit must also be set forth in the Gospel. Any system without the death of Christ, His burial, resurrection, His blood, with the office and work of the Holy Spirit, would not be received by any intelligent people. To this, all worthy of any note will agree.

The way is now clear to look for the Gospel and see if we can find where it was fully preached first.

It will be simpler and easier to divide it off into periods. Take, then, the entire period from Adam to John the Immerser, and inquire which one of the holy men, the ancient seers, or men whom God authorized to speak to man, ever preached that Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures? The answer certainly is, none of them. Which one of these holy men preached that the Lord was buried? Not a man of them. Which one of them ever preached that He rose from the dead according to the Scriptures? Not a single man of them. Which one of them ever preached that the Lord shed His blood for many for the remission of sins? Not a man during the entire period to which reference is here made. Which one of them ever set forth the office and work of the Holy Spirit? None of them. No matter how good the men, how strong their faith, nor how pious, these were not their themes. These great fundamental and central matters of the kingdom, filling such a large space in the apostles' preaching, had no place in their teaching. These were matters but dimly shadowed forth in their predictions and not understood by any man of that entire period. How, then, let it be inquired, did they preach the Gospel without preaching that Jesus died, was buried, rose again, shed His blood, or even setting forth the office and work of the Holy Spirit? The answer is simply that they never preached the Gospel of Christ in all its fullness or completeness.

Some one says, "I grant that the Gospel was not preached in its completeness and fullness during the period just specified. But my ground is this: John the Immerser was the first great Gospel preacher. He founded the Church, opened the door, preached the Gospel in all its fullness, and introduced the first persons into the kingdom." Are you sure of that? In what part of John's preaching did he preach that the Lord died for our sins according to the Scriptures? Most assuredly he never preached it at all, for he preached his last sermon and died himself before the Lord died. He certainly never preached that Jesus died before he did die. Nor did he ever preach that the Lord was buried before he was buried. The preaching of John was all over before the Lord was buried. His preaching was all done before the Lord was risen, and he unquestionably never preached that the Lord was risen before he was risen. The same is true in regard to the shedding of his blood. John had preached the last sermon, and his own blood was shed before the Lord shed his blood. He certainly did not preach that Jesus shed his blood before he did shed it. These were not the themes on which John dwelt, not the themes which the Lord put into his mouth. The Lord was not ready for these themes yet.

The inquiry now comes up touching the meaning of preaching the Gospel "in its fullness or completeness." This must now be explained. "The Gospel was preached to Abraham"; and, again, "the Gos-

pel was preached to them as well as to us." "What is the meaning of all this," says a man, "if the Gospel was not preached before John the Immerser, nor by him?" The Gospel was preached before John, and "the Gospel of the kingdom" by him, but not in a complete revelation, or it was only in a mystery. This must now be explained.

1. There is something in the Scriptures called "the eternal purpose" of God. This "eternal purpose" was in the fullness of time to send the Savior, publish the Gospel, establish the Church, and unite the Jews and Gentiles in "one body." This purpose contained Christ, the Gospel, and all things pertaining to the new institution, in a mystery, or a secret. It contained the Gospel, "hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ." No human being knew anything about it.

2. We then have something called "the promise." What promise? The promise that God made to Abraham. (See Gen. xxii: also, Gal. iii:8.) That which was contained in the purpose of God is now embodied in a promise—the promise of God to Abraham. This promise contains Christ, the Gospel, the Church—the entire new institution. It is all couched in the few brief words: "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Still no man understood what was contained in this promise. It was the Gospel *in promise.*

3. Then come the prophecies. The same that existed in the purpose of God, and then in the prom-

ise, is next found embodied in prophecy—it is the Gospel in prophecy.

4. Then came John the Immerser, the twelve apostles, the Savior, and the seventy others, preaching the good tidings of the kingdom—that the kingdom is at hand—the kingdom approaches. This was the Gospel and the kingdom in a preparatory or an incipient state, or not fully developed and unfolded.

5. When Jesus had died, been buried, shed His blood, risen, and ascended into heaven; when He sent the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth, under the last commission, they made a full revelation of that which had previously existed in a mystery in the different forms just described.

To illustrate what is here meant, suppose some man in your community conceives the idea of building a great factory, and, after maturing it for a time purposes to do it. There is now a factory in *purpose,* but not in fact, neither running nor doing work. Nor does any man know any thing of it except the man who has it in his purpose, nor has it any existence anywhere except in his *purpose.* It is all a secret. After a time, in a conversation with some prominent men in the community, he embodies his purpose in a promise to build a factory. There is yet no factory in existence, except in purpose and promise. The promise is being known in the community, excites some interest and sets inquiry in motion. He now advances another step and makes sundry predictions in reference to the factory, touch-

ing the time when it will be completed, the amount of work it will do, the advantage it will be to the community, etc. The factory still has no existence only in purpose, promise, and prophecy. The next thing you hear is that the ground has been broken, the foundation laid, materials brought together, machinery purchased, etc. It is now a factory in a preparatory or an incipient state, but not complete nor doing any work. But finally it is finished and set in motion; the looms clatter, the spindles hum; it is now complete and doing work. It was a factory first in purpose, then in promise, then in prophecy, then in a preparatory, or incipient state, then in fact, in actual existence, complete in all its parts, doing work. So the Gospel and kingdom of God first existed only in the purpose of God, then in the promise to Abraham, then in the prophecies of the Old Testament, then in the preparatory or incipient state, and finally in a state of completeness and perfection, or full operation on Pentecost.

But now one more period must be considered. Some man will say, "I will go to the apostles during the life-time of the Savior, while they were bosom companions with him and receiving daily lessons of instruction from his lips. They then understood all about the Gospel and kingdom, and set out these matters rightly." A very brief consideration of the matter will show that you are greatly mistaken in that. During the Lord's personal ministry the apostles neither understood the Gospel nor the kingdom.

There is nothing clearer than that they did not understand their Master and Leader during this period. They had their minds in one direction and the Lord had His in another. The matter worked according to His mind and not according to theirs. They found their views full of mistakes and blunders, and His without a single mistake. You never find Him disappointed. But take a few examples:

If any one thinks the apostles preached the Gospel fully, during the life-time of the Savior, such an one should consult Matt. xvi:20, "Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ." How could they preach the Gospel fully without telling any man that "Jesus is the Christ?" This is the very first thing to tell in preaching the Gospel fully, and the very first thing they did tell after commencing under the last commission. This restriction had to be taken off before they could preach the Gospel fully.

Again, Matt. xvi:21, the Lord said to the disciples, "That he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." How did Peter take this? "Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be to thee." Was Peter all right in this? Certainly not; hence, the Lord said, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense to me, for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." What did Peter mean?

He had his heart on an earthly kingdom and an earthly king, and he did not believe that his king would be put to death, nor intend to permit it. He intended to encourage his Master with assurances that he would stand by him. If a man doubts the correctness of this, he can turn to Matt. xxvi, and read the account of the matter. True to his purpose, he "drew a sword and struck a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear." This little comment shows what he meant. He did not believe at this time that Jesus would die, and intended to fight to defend him, still believing that He would be an earthly king. The Lord told him to "put up the sword again, for all those who take the sword shall perish with the sword."

Again, "Peter said to him, though all men shall be offended because of thee, I never will be offended." The Lord replied, "Verily, I say to thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said to him, though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise said also all the disciples." See Matt. xxvi. How did the matter turn out? While the Lord was on trial, and needed a friend more than He had ever done before, Peter sat "without the palace, and a damsel came to him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest." Presently, the matter was pressed on him, one saying, "This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth." This "he denied with

an oath," declaring, "I do not know the man." The third time the matter was pressed on him, saying, "Surely thou are also one of them, for thy speech betrayeth thee. Then he began to curse and swear, saying, I know not the man." (See Matt. xxvi:69-75.) Surely no man's attainments in divine things are to be envied who can not see that this was a preparatory period; that things were not ready yet; that the apostles were not yet qualified nor able to preach the Gospel in all its fullness. It was in view of this the Lord said, "Peter, when thou are converted, strengthen thy brethren." The mind of Peter and all the apostles, to say nothing of the disciples and the balance of the people, needed turning from their expectation of an earthly kingdom to a kingdom not of this world. When he saw the Lord on trial, he did not desire to be identified with Him, as He was on trial for His life. He did not know what His fate might be.

Some one might conclude that some of those good women that followed him had better understanding than these men. What, then, was the purpose of those who went to the sepulcher early on the morning of the third day? They were probably as intelligent as any of their time. Were they expecting Him to rise? Not a word of it. But they were making preparation to embalm His body, to preserve it. When they came to the sepulcher, saw the stone rolled away, an angel sitting on it, looked in, saw the clean linen and napkin laid aside in order, but

the body was missing, they were overwhelmed, and asked the angel, thinking he was a man, "Sir, have you removed the body of Jesus?" The angel said, "He is not here, but has risen as he told you he would, and goes before you into Galilee. Hasten and tell his disciples."

They hastened away, with the grand theme burning in their hearts, and told it to the disciples, "and their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." (See Luke xxiv:11.) Thomas said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger in the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." (See John xx:25.) From considerations like these, any person of ordinary intelligence can see that the apostles did not understand that the kingdom would be spiritual, but supposed it would be a worldly, civil government till Jesus died; and, even after He rose from the dead and appeared to them, they said, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (See Acts i:6.) This puts it out of the question about their preaching the Gospel in its fullness, or the kingdom being fully established and the reign of Christ in operation while He was in this world.

The time was now come to open a brighter chapter than any in the past, and see whether we have no better light than can be obtained from the apostles while they were unbelievers themselves in the main matters to be preached. Now turn attention

to where the Lord appears in the midst of the disciples, as you read John xx:26-28, and hear Him address Thomas: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God." There is no account of Thomas waiting to examine the nail-prints or the scar in His side. He is utterly overwhelmed when he sees the Lord standing before him alive. The Lord now proceeds:

"All authority in heaven and earth is given to me. Go, therefore, and teach all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"—"Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He who believes and is immersed shall be saved, but he who believes not shall be condemned."

This was entirely new, and the first time they were ever commanded to go into "all the world" and "preach the Gospel to every creature." Their former commission was to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," but "not in the way of the Gentiles." This limitation is now taken off, and they have the divine authority to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature"—to "disciple all nations." This new commission not only differs from the first one in the extent of the territory, or the population to which they were to go, but also in the substance of it. It contains differ-

ent matter. Under the first commission, they were to preach that "the kingdom is at hand"; under the second, to "preach repentance and remission of sins in my name." The first commission was preparatory to the coming kingdom; the second was the administration of the Gospel under the new reign or institution.

But the Lord commanded them to "wait for the promise"; to "tarry in Jerusalem till you shall be endued with power from on high"; for the "Comforter shall come, and when he is come, he shall guide you into all truth." He was still not ready for them to proceed, but continued to appear to them at intervals, giving abundant opportunity to see Him, hear Him, handle Him, eat with Him, drink with Him, thus making themselves competent witnesses of His resurrection. When about forty days had expired, and the preparatory work was all done, the time came for His departure. He loved the disciples and made a special request for them that they might be with Him, and behold His glory which the Father gave Him. (See John xvii:24.) He took them out to Mount Olive, imparted to them His last benediction while on earth, bade them adieu, rose up in their presence and started away toward heaven. A heavy cloud was thrown in the background—it might be to give grandeur and splendor to the scene. As they stood gazing after Him as He ascended up into heaven, a convoy of angels appeared and shouted, "Galileans, why stand *you* gaz-

ing up into heaven? That same Jesus that *you* see going into heaven, shall so come in like manner as *you* have seen him going up into heaven."

As He approaches the everlasting city, the mandate is heard, "Lift up your heads, O *you* gates; and be *you lift up, you* everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." Then a response is heard, "Who is this King of glory?" The answer is, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." Then the shout is raised again, "Lift up your heads, O *you* gates, even lift them up, *you* everlasting doors; and the king of glory shall come in." Again the question is heard, "Who is this King of glory?" Then follows the final reply. "The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." He entered heaven with all our names engraven on His breast, amidst the shouts of joy of all the hierarchs of the upper world, and the Almighty commanded all the angels to bow down and worship the Christian's Lord, the Messiah, Immanuel, God with us.

Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, and Uriel, with all the shining and burning hosts before the throne, bowed in profound awe, and worshiped the glorified Redeemer. The Infinite One, the I Am, the Jehovah, rose up and invited Him to a seat in His throne. While all the celestial grandees of the spiritual world looked on our King, "the only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords" ascended the throne; "sat down at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens." With His own

hands the Almighty Father crowned Him Lord of all; and as He could swear by no greater, He took oath by His own great name, that He should reign till all His enemies should be put under His feet; till every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Lord, to the glory of God.

The coronation ceremonies lasted about a week. During this period all was quiet on earth. Indeed, from the death of Jesus till this period there was not a preacher in the world authorized to utter a word in the form of preaching. All was silence and waiting. But when the King had ascended the throne and was crowned Lord of all—when all things were ready—the preparatory work was all done, the King proceeded, as He had promised, to send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to guide the apostles into all truth. The apostles, with about one hundred and twenty brethren, were all together in one place, waiting for the promise. The day of Pentecost had "fully come," and "suddenly there was a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." (See Acts ii:2.) "And there appeared to them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat on each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

This brings us up to the place of beginning. The Lord said that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations,

beginning at Jerusalem." Jerusalem, is, then, the *place* of beginning. Peter, after his first sermon to the Gentiles, in his vindication before his Jewish brethren, in view of receiving the first Gentile converts, said, "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them (the Gentiles, at the house of Cornelius) as on us (the Jews, on Pentecost) at the beginning." That which was done on Pentecost was in the right *place* (in Jerusalem) and at the right *time* ("at the beginning"). Here, in Jerusalem, is the beginning *place,* and on the day of Pentecost the beginning *time.* The beginning time and place of what? The beginning of the reign of Christ; of preaching under the new, and, as may be justly said, the last commission; of repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus Christ.

But some man inquires, what have you gained by preaching so long to find the place and time of beginning? Much is gained by it. Without finding this beginning there can be no clear and intelligible understanding nor preaching of the Gospel. The preacher without this beginning distinctly fixed in his mind, can no more preach intelligently than a pilot can run his ship to a given point out at sea without knowing what sea he is in, or without knowing where the starting-point is. He could run toward any point of the compass called for, but he could not tell you where nor when you would land, unless you would give him the place of beginning. In like manner, not a surveyor in the world can run

a line till you give him the "place of beginning." You can not even make a deed to a lot of land till you find what is called "the place of beginning."

Since surveying has come up, as an illustration, it may be used still further to good advantage. Suppose A and B join lands. They purchased their lands many years ago when lands were cheap, and they were not particular about the lines. But now the lands are worth one hundred dollars per acre. Mr. A is looking at a fine spring near where the line is supposed to be, and noticing the crystal water as it ripples over the pebbles below. He also views a magnificent row of apple-trees and valuable fence, and thinks if the line were run correctly the spring, trees, and fence would be on his land. He talks about it to his neighbors, and those who agree with him he regards as very intelligent people, much better and more desirable associates than those who differ from him. Indeed, those who differ from him he considers not very good people, and does not seek their company. Mr. B esteems those who think the spring, the trees, and fence are on his land, and seeks them for his associates.

Thus the controversy continues for a time; but, finally, they decide to have the controversy settled. To this end they call the surveyor. But, on examination, the surveyor fails to find a corner-stone, a witness-tree, or land-mark of any description on the entire premises. What is now to be down? He refers to his field-notes and finds an established corner, it

may be, some distance from the line to be run. After surveying, running lines in different directions, and sundry measurements, he points to a spot and orders the loose soil that he sees has been made there to be removed. When this is done they find the corner-stone, with the land-marks on it, corresponding to his field-notes. He plants his staff at "the place of beginning," places the compass on it, the needle settles, and he is now ready to take a look through the compass.

A and B are no idle spectators, but are looking on with intense interest. No danger of either becoming drowsy now, though they may be first-class sleepers in church. Mr. A slips up and peeps through the compass, and perceives that his spring, trees, and fence are about to be cut off. Under much excitement and not in a very pleasant manner, he turns to the surveyor, and exclaims, "It is all wrong, sir." The surveyor inquires deliberately, "What makes you think so?" He replies, with much feeling, "Why, do you not see that you are about to cut off my fine spring, my fruit trees and fence?"

How much attention do you suppose a surveyor would give to such talk? About as much as a Gospel preacher would give to the man who thinks the Gospel line wrong because it cuts off his church. He would probably tell him that he should have built his fence and planted his fruit-trees on the other side of the line, and that he will run the line ac-

cording to law, as he is bound by his oath to do, if it cut off his house and barn into the bargain.

"But," shouts a man, "what would you do, when the Gospel line is run, if you should find yourself on the wrong side of the line?" Simply as the man did who had his land run off, and found his cabin was on the wrong side of the line; he moved *over the line*, on to the *right side*, and on to *his own land*. "But," says a man, "I despise to see a turn-coat; a man leaving one church and going to another." True, there is something a little unpleasant in turning one's coat. Still, there is one thing more ridiculous than a man turning his coat, and that is to see a man so obstinate as to wear his coat wrong side out rather than to turn it. It is much wiser and better to turn it, when it is found to be wrong side out, than to persist in wearing it wrong side out, even if some bigot should say "a turn-coat." If you make a mistake in roads, and go a wrong road several miles, it is unpleasant to turn and go back to where you got out of the road, but it is much wiser and better to do it than to continue on in the wrong road. Who will not admit that Luther did better, in turning, than he would have done to have continued in Romanism? The matter of *turning* all depends on the question whether you are right or not. If you are right, then by all means never turn. If you are not right then turn, the sooner the better.

But since a good illustration is at hand, it must

not be thrown aside till well used. Suppose, then, the partition running through the center of the pews in front of the stand is the Gospel line, and that man sitting a little to one side of it is occupying the position of his church. As the preacher is starting out to run the line, he sees that is to be left slightly on the wrong side, and rises and appeals to the preacher as follows:

"Hold on, if you please, a little. I do love a charitable man. You see that my church is only a little to the wrong side; now we have many good praying members and good *paying* members, too; do please be charitable and bend the line only a little, and take my church in."

Say the preacher is one of your pliable and charitable men, with an easy conscience, and he yields, saying, "There are good and bad in all churches; they are all right at heart," and bends the Gospel line so as to take them in.

As soon as this is done, up spring three men, pleading for their three churches, only a little further from the line, telling how many good people they have, and that they are all good at heart, though they do not see precisely as other people. They, too, tell how they love a charitable preacher, and how good a man they think the preacher is. He has now commenced the work of bending the line, and will not make the matter any worse to bend it a little more. He, therefore, bends it and takes them in. Thus they continue to praise him for his charity,

tell him how good a man he is, and persuade him to bend it a little more and a little more, till, finally, he is a Universalist, runs the line clear round the human family, and takes them all in, leaving no church, or no world, or all church and all world. This is the result of what these charitable folks will do when they carry out their principles, or rather, their want of principles, to their legitimate result. They would nullify the entire Gospel and make nothing of it.

Now, turn your eye back to Peter, as he stands up with the eleven, under the infallible power of the Spirit of God to guide him into all truth, on the brightest day the Lord ever created, the great Pentecost. He has a new commission, under which he has never preached. The Lord has gone into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, and is crowned Lord of all. He now stands at the beginning. He has the keys of the kingdom of God. He now has the death of Jesus, his burial, his resurrection, the shedding of his blood, the office and work of the Holy Spirit, the ascension and coronation of the king, for the first time to preach repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus. He has before him Jews and proselytes, devout men from every nation under heaven. He is in the right place, in Jerusalem, and at the right time, when the Holy Spirit was poured out on them "at the beginning." For the first time he opens out: "You men of Israel, hear these words:

Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as you yourselves also know; him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains, death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." He declared to them that David had said that God had sworn that "he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne," and that "this Jesus, God had raised up" and "exalted to his own right hand." This was all new, having never been understood or preached before by any of the apostles, or anybody else; and when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and cried out, "What shall we do?" Here stood the man who had the keys of the kingdom, ready to open the door, and, in one sentence he exercised the power, symbolized by the keys, opened the door, or, which is the same, the way to God, the terms of pardon, in the following words: "Repent and be immersed, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Here one of the most singular things in these times of apostasy and disloyalty to God makes its appearance. Men talk about "called and sent preachers," but very few of them ever come to this grandest occasion since creation's dawn, where we have an account of "called and sent preachers," of

their preaching, what they preached, that the preaching cut the hearers to the heart, what they inquired, and what they were commanded to do. They rarely come to those grand occasions, where the Holy Spirit came to guide these "called and sent preachers" into all truth and follow the directions given by the apostles to those inquiring the way into the kingdom. Why do they come not here if they have any love for what was preached "by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven?" Why do they come not here if they have what was preached by truly "called and sent preachers?" Why do they come not here if they delight in that which is truly the work of the Holy Spirit? Why, if they would understand how things were at the start, not come up here to the "beginning?"

The reason is at hand; they do not receive the terms of pardon as laid down by Peter. They do not accept the use of the keys of the kingdom, as set forth in his words, opening the kingdom, or giving the terms of pardon. They have "another Gospel, which is not another," but a perversion of the Gospel of Christ. In turning away from the terms of pardon, set forth by the Holy Spirit through Peter, they have no terms. They have no plan of salvation, no definite terms, with which any person can comply, and have the promise of remission of sins. They can exhort the sinner to seek, to believe, to give up his whole heart, to keep back nothing, but never come to the promise of God that he

"shall be saved." They have closed their eyes to the light of the Gospel, and are literally in the dark, on the way of salvation.

Some man responds, "But I do not believe in baptism for the remission of sins." Who has preached any "baptism for the remission of sins?" "You have done it, not five minutes since," he replies. Are you sure of that? "I am; I can not be mistaken," he replies. Well, you are not mistaken. You heard it, but it was when the precise words of Peter were quoted, "Repent and be immersed, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, *for the remission of sins,*" or, as before quoted, "*in order to the remission of sins.*" Do you say you can not receive any such teaching? If you do, it is to be regretted; but it can not be helped if you should refuse to receive one-half that is in the Bible. It is the precise language of Scripture, and if you refuse to receive it, you refuse to receive the precise language of Scripture.

"I do not mean that," says a man, "but I do not receive *your interpretation* of it." There has been no interpretation of it given, nor any thing but the *precise words of Scripture,* and if you reject any thing it must be the language of Scripture. It is the *language* of Scripture that is here adopted, and not any man's *interpretation.*

"I want the evidence of pardon," says a man. That is all right. You ought to have the evidence of pardon. But where is the evidence of pardon?

Is it an *old* revelation or a *new* one, in the Bible or not in the Bible, through Christ or immediately from God? You say "In the Bible." Right; it is in the Bible. Here it is. "He who believes and is immersed, shall be saved." Mark xvi:16. Here is the evidence of pardon in the promise of Jesus, "Shall be saved." "Is that all the evidence of pardon?" says one. Is not that enough? "That is the mere word," continues the objector. What do you mean by calling the Lord's word "the mere word?" Do you mean that it is not sufficient; that you can not rely on it? "The thief on the cross was saved without baptism," continues the objector. How do you know that the thief was saved at all? "I did not know that any body denied that." No matter whether any body denies it or not, how do you know that he was saved? Jesus said to him, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." True, Jesus said that, but that is "the mere word!" "Is not that sufficient?" Certainly it is; and if you have got so far that you can believe the word, turn back to the commission: "He who believes and is immersed, shall be saved." The words of Jesus are as true in one case as they are in the other. They are beyond all doubt true in both cases. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, repent and be immersed, and you have the promise that you shall be saved. Think of the power of the three words "shall be saved." If you can not depend on these words, it is not *immersion* you need, but *faith*. Immersion is of no value to

any man who has no faith in the word of God, or not faith enough in it to rely on it for pardon, and even for the hope of heaven.

If the Lord were to take you from your seat to heaven and set you down before the throne, and you should exclaim, as one of old, "Lord, Jesus, I am a poor sinful man"; and the Lord should then reply, "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven," and then return you to your seat, you would spring to your feet in an ecstacy, exclaiming, "I am pardoned." But where is the evidence? Only in the words "Thy sins are all forgiven." You may trifle with them as you please, call them "mere words" or any thing else; but they contain the evidence of your pardon. Strike them out and you have no evidence of pardon.

"I intend to turn to God before I die; but there is time enough yet," says one. How do you know how much time there is yet? You are like the man in a yawl, two miles above the falls of Niagara, with two good oars, with his hands folded, floating directly on toward the great cataract. A man on shore calls to him: "My dear friend, there is danger ahead, lay hold of your oars and come to the shore, or you will go over the falls and precipitate one hundred and fifty feet down." He looks up with an air of indifference, and says, "I know there is danger ahead, but I am coming to the shore before I get to it." On he moves one mile, when another friend calls to him and entreats him to come to the shore.

He still thinks there is time yet and goes on another half mile. The last friend calls to him and entreats him to be aroused for his condition. He lifts his eyes, sees the vast spray rising, the rainbow in the mist, and hears the roar of the immense waters as they pour in majesty down; sees the mighty rush of the waters and the white-caps on the rapids above the falls; is filled with alarm; seizes the oars and struggles, but in a few moments discovers that it is too late. He calls to the man on the tower, "O, for help!" The man exhorts him to struggle for his life. This he does, now nobly, but it is too late. He writhes and cries, "O, why was I so simple as to wait till it was too late?" Over he precipitates, down he plunges into the fearful deep below, and is gone forever.

Will you, men and women of the world, waste your manhood and womanhood in sin and folly, and then entertain the thought of performing the work of a life-time in a death struggle, and being saved? If you do, depend on it, you may lament your folly where lamentation will avail nothing, where there is no repentance, but where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched. "Turn, O turn, why will you die?" While there is mercy, grace, and compassion, turn and live forever. "Whoever will," says the Lord, "let him come." "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden; and you shall find rest." Come, O, come, and have the peace of God which passes all understanding.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

By J. S. SWEENEY

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?—Acts xvi:30.

THERE is a general agreement among Protestants that the principle on which men are accepted with God is the same, and has been the same, in all dispensations, patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian. In fact, principles never change. Forms, ceremonies, ordinances, and positive enactments have been changed with the different dispensations, but the same principles obtain through all. Principles are durable. Faith is a principle running through all the dispensations of religion. It is the principle, on our part, upon which God accepts and blesses us. This principle has obtained from Adam to the present time. But faith, merely as a conviction of the heart, merely as a psychological condition, is not sufficient, and never has been, to bring the soul into acceptance with God and the enjoyment of His promises. In this meager sense it is worthless; it is dead. Faith must be a real, living, actual principle to benefit the soul. It must be faithfulness to God. It must

be fidelity to Him. It must be firm allegiance to duty to God and implicit trust in Him. In divinely appointed forms, ceremonies, ordinances, and positive laws, faith acts, expresses itself, actualizes itself, and becomes the living, actual, real principle on which men are accepted with God. Real, living faith hears what God says, does what He bids, and trusts His promises. Only such faith is worth anything; indeed, only such faith is alive.

The Bible deals very little in verbal definitions. Its method of teaching is rather by examples, illustrations, exemplifications of principles. God shows us principles in the lives of men. The life of Abraham is God's definition of faith to men. In that life, God shows us what He means by faith. Here we have a complete, divine standard of faith. Hence Abraham is "the father of all them that believe." He is held up in the Bible as an example of faith, and all who would be children of God are bidden to "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham." In no instance was faith ever put to severer trial. But in every trial it came out approved. It expressed itself. It actualized itself.

"By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith, he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the promise."

And again: "By faith, Abraham when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called, accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead."

Abraham staggered at nothing. What God said do, that he did, yielding unquestioning obedience to God. No sacrifice of ease, or feeling, or philosophy was too great for him. Isaac was to Abraham everything. All promises, all his hopes, were bound up in him. He was absolutely *all* the future to Abraham. But he did not withhold him from God. And when he had in his heart offered him up to God, then it was he came to the ram, the *substitute* God provided for Isaac, the type of Him to whom faith now brings us all. Here we have the true type of faith, and the type of Christ, our sacrifice.

God bids us look at Abraham, and thus shows us what *He means by faith.* In Abraham He presents us a man that was faithful to Him; not merely when it was convenient; not merely when it seemed wise to him; not merely when it was in the line of his pleasure, or philosophy, or convenience; but at all times and at any sacrifice.

Abraham's faith was expressed and actualized by doing what God required *him* to do. Noah's faith was actualized by doing what God told *him* to do. So, under the Christian dispensation, faith comes into actual existence by obedience to the commands

of Christ. The principle is the same, but its actualization differs under the different dispensations. Faith is the same *subjectively* in all dispensations: but *objectively* it is varied by the divine commands.

With these remarks premised, we proceed to the question: *"What must I do to be saved?"*

This is a practical question. It is *the* practical question, and, in fact, the only really practical question in the whole matter of our salvation. Of course, God saves us. His love is the prime, moving cause of our salvation. But all questions as to the divine attributes are theoretical, and all deductions as to the action of these attributes are theoretical, and all deductions as to the action of these attributes are more or less speculative.

God saves us through Jesus Christ. The death of Jesus is the sole meritorious, or compensative cause of our salvation. But even the atonement is not a practical question. Just how God can, in virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, be just and the justifier of the believer, we may not understand. How the death of Christ met the demands of justice and satisfied the claims of the law against us, is not a practical question. It is enough for us to accept the facts as stated in the word of God.

All we do or can do is merely *appropriative*. But what God has required of us must be done. This is, therefore, the practical question: "What must I do to be saved?" It is not what must God, or Christ, or the Holy Spirit do? but what must *I* do? That's

the practical question with us in the whole matter.

We find this question, substantially, propounded four times in the *New Testament* by sinners, and in no case were they rebuked for it. On the other hand, it was always heard and treated as a proper question, both by the Savior Himself, and, after Him, by His disciples. The first instance was that of the rich young man who came to Jesus in His personal ministry and asked: "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus told him to "keep the commandments." The young man again asked: "Which?" Jesus referred him to the commandments of the decalogue. The young man answered: "All these have I kept from my youth up; what lack I yet?" This was under the Mosaic dispensation, and the law given by Moses, as a divine code, was still in force.

The young man knew the law. He had lived under it from his youth up. He expected, no doubt, that Jesus would tell him something else, if not different from the law, in addition to it. And he had reason to expect something else. Jesus in speaking of the law, in the sermon on the mount, had said quite enough to justify the expectation. But the law was still in force. True, the evening twilight of that dispensation had come, and the morning twilight of the new one was dawning; but the law was yet in force, and Jesus taught the young man to keep it. All else he could then do was,

in the language of Jesus: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow me."

Under the law, a Jew's whole duty was to keep the law. In the mingling twilight of the dispensations, while yet the law was in force, one could keep the law, and leave all and follow Jesus, as the disciples did, and thus be schooled for the work of the coming dispensation. Under the Christian dispensation, one's whole duty is to hear and obey Christ. We are under the full light of the Christian dispensation. We can not, therefore, now properly answer one as Jesus did the rich young man. That answer was right then, but it would not be right now. No one, I presume, would so answer a sinner now.

After the ascension of our Savior and the descension of the Holy Spirit, and after the law, given until the promised seed should come, had expired by limitation, and the Gospel had been committed to the disciples to be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, we find in Acts of Apostles this question three times propounded, and answered.

When the Gospel was first preached at Jerusalem by Peter, the convicted Jews there "said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?*"—to be saved, of course.

Then, again, Saul, when convinced that Jesus, whom he had theretofore persecuted so fiercely, was

indeed the Christ, he asked the Lord, "*What wilt thou have me to do?*"

In the text, the jailor at Philippi propounds the same question substantially to Paul and Silas. It is the answer to this question with which this sermon will have to do.

In the first place, we notice that the answers to this question, even in the Christian dispensation, and all given to sinners, are not the same. At Jerusalem, Peter's answer was: "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts ii:38.)

When Saul propounded this question to the Savior, we read that the "Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Saul went. The Lord then sent Ananias to tell him what he "must do." Ananias went; and, after telling him that he was to be an apostle and a witness unto all men of what he had seen and heard, he said: "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts xxii:16.)

The jailer at Philippi was answered "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." The question is the same substantially in all these cases, but in each case receives a different answer. Why is this? If we can determine why it is, we shall at the same time, and by the same proc-

ess, arrive at the full exhaustive answer to the question of the sermon, "What must I do to be saved?"

Let us try to take a comprehensive view of this great subject. It is so easy to be narrow in our views that it requires an effort to be otherwise. It is possible for one to look so steadfastly and intently upon one thing as to be unable to see another. It is possible for one to believe one thing so devoutly as not to believe another thing equally true, at all. It is possible for one so to interpret a statement of Scripture as to make it contradict another statement equally true, consistent, and important. Friends of the Scriptures ought to try to interpret them harmoniously. Every statement of Scripture upon a given subject should be so interpreted, if possible, as to admit of the truth of every other Scripture statement upon the same subject. Enemies of the Bible do not always so interpret it, but surely its friends should. Would we not so interpret the statements of a letter from a friend? Would we put any possible interpretation upon any statement in a letter from a friend, even though it should make it contradict other statements in the same letter? Not if it were possible to interpret them all harmoniously.

Now, let us apply this rule of harmonious interpretation to each and all of the Scripture answers to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" If it be possible, and it certainly is, as we shall see, let us construe all these answers consistently and har-

moniously. If we agree to this, and I trust we do, the difficulty is passed, and we shall have no further trouble in understanding the subject.

Let us begin with the answer of Paul and Silas to the jailor—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." It is possible, now, to interpret this statement as a full, detailed, and an exhaustive answer to the question for the sinner under all circumstances, and, thus, to come to the conclusion that a sinner has only to believe on the Lord Jesus to be saved. But, then, what shall we do with the answer of Peter, at Jerusalem—"Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins?" and with that of Ananias to Saul—"Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord?"

Shall we make that contradict these? Or shall we so construe these as to make them mean nothing? We want no contradiction; neither do we desire to interpret any part of the word of God clean away; so we will try another interpretation of the phrase, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." We will say it is not an exhaustive answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" but a sufficient and a proper answer to the person who asked it, *in his condition*, and, indeed, the proper answer to all persons under like circumstances, but to be supplemented by further instructions when circumstances and conditions are changed; that is, we will conclude that, while Paul and Silas only told the jailor to

"believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," immediately upon his asking the question, they afterward—after enlightening him concerning the way of salvation—commanded him to "repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." This would harmonize the two answers, anyhow.

Now let us see if the context will not justify—does not, in fact demand—this interpretation. Immediately following the answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house," we read as follows: "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes and was baptized, he and all his, straightway."

So it appears that immediately upon telling the inquirer to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, "they spake unto him the word of the Lord." Now, when he heard the "word of the Lord" and believed, his condition was changed—the condition of his mind, certainly, and most likely that of his heart. When the apostles told him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, they did not wait for him to ask, who is the Lord Jesus Christ? or, how can I believe? but they immediately "spake unto him the word of the Lord." This was, of course, to enlighten him concerning the Lord Jesus, for as yet there is no evidence that the jailor had even heard of him. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of the Lord." They spake unto him the word of the Lord,

therefore, that he might believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, as they had commanded him. When he heard the word, and had become a believer, did not the apostles command him to repent and be baptized? It is not written that they did, but is it not clearly *inferable* that they did? Why did he take them the same hour of the night and wash their stripes, and be baptized? What did he know about baptism if they had not told him? Repentance and baptism are a part of "the word of the Lord." When, therefore, "they spake unto him the word of the Lord," he learned the further duties of repentance and baptism; and that accounts for his attending to them the same hour of the night.

It is important to bear in mind the condition of the jailor when he asked what he must do to be saved. He had not heard the word of the Lord. He was not a believer in Jesus. There is no evidence that he knew anything of Him whatever. He had doubtless heard that Paul and Silas claimed to be "the servants of the most high God," to "show unto the people the way of salvation." The "damsel possessed with a spirit of divination" had followed them, proclaiming this for many days. Paul cast the spirit out of her. Her masters were enraged. Paul and Silas were arrested, and beaten, and delivered to the jailor. This was all he knew about them up to the time he thrust them into the prison.

The great earthquake at midnight aroused him. The situation alarmed him. He, supposing the

prisoners had escaped, was about to take his own life. Paul told him to do himself no harm; that the prisoners had not gone, as he had feared. The jailor then recollected that Paul and Silas claimed to be the servants of the most high God. He was satisfied the prison had been shaken by the power of the most high God. He concluded, therefore, that they must be the servants of the most high God, showing the people the way of salvation. Hence it was that he asked them what he must do to be saved. The apostles gave him a general answer, stating the general principle upon which sinners are saved, deferring the details until he had heard the word of the Lord and believed. Then, as we have seen, having learned the way of salvation more fully, he proceeded, penitently, to be baptized the same hour of the night.

Now, let us look more particularly into the condition of the persons at Jerusalem who "said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?" We find, by examining the context, that Peter had *already* preached unto them Jesus as the Lord and Christ, concluding his sermon with this sentence: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Then we are told that "when they heard this they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter did not tell them to

believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, as Paul told the jailor; and why not? Evidently because they already believed. They had heard the story of Jesus; of His resurrection, exaltation, and coronation in heaven. It had gone into their hearts. They believed it, and asked for their duty. Peter commanded them to do precisely what the jailor did *after he heard the word* and believed: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." So we find these two answers, not contradictory, but harmonious, only varied by the condition of the parties addressed.

As we have already seen, when Saul asked this same question, "What wilt thou have me to do?" he was told to go into the city of Damascus, and there it should be told him what he "must do." Ananias was sent to him, who told him only to "arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Why did he not tell him to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," as Paul himself afterwards told the jailor? Because Saul already believed. Had he not seen the Lord Himself and heard the truth from His own mouth, on the way from Jerusalem? He certainly had, and certainly was now a believer, in so far as faith is a conviction of the heart. As a believer, he had asked for his duty, and had been sent to Damascus with the promise that there he should be told what he "must do"; and Ananias had been sent there to tell

him. There was no need to tell *him* to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. He did that already. He was not in the same condition of the jailor at Philippi, who had never heard the word of the Lord and believed, and, therefore, did not need the same answer.

Why, then, was not Saul told to "*repent* and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," as Peter told the inquiring Jews at Jerusalem? Simply because Ananias had sufficient evidence that Saul was already a penitent man. Had he not been in Damascus "three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink?" and had not the Lord told Ananias that Saul was praying? Why tell him to repent? Ananias knew he was a penitent already; knew he was a penitent believer—a praying penitent believer; and, therefore, did not tell him to believe, or to repent, but to arise and be baptized, and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord. He instructed him as to his duty according to his condition and need.

Thus we see that though the answers to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" varied in words somewhat in these three cases, owing to the different conditions of the inquirers, yet, in fact, they are in perfect harmony. The jailor, the Jews to whom Peter preached at Jerusalem, and Saul, all did precisely the same things; they all believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; they all repented, and were all baptized. Now, it brings us to the complete an-

swer to our question. If an untaught, unbelieving person should ask the question, as the jailor, it would be right to answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," as Paul and Silas did. But when taught the word of the Lord, as were the Jews at Jerusalem, it would be right to answer, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins," as Peter did. And when the inquirer is a penitent, praying believer, as Saul was, he should be told, "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." All travel over precisely the same ground, so to speak, but are answered differently, because they asked the question at different points on the way.

For illustration, let us suppose three persons three miles from your city, and, at that point, one of them asks a man whom he meets, "How far is it to your city?" He is answered correctly, "Three miles." They travel a mile on the way, and there another of the three asks a gentleman whom he meets, "How far is it to your city?" and is answered correctly, "*Two* miles." A mile further, the third one inquires, and is answered, "One mile." We can see how each inquirer was answered correctly; yet the answers were different, being varied by the distance of the parties from the objective point. But all these traveled over the same ground. It was right, when three miles away, to answer, "Three miles"; but that answer would not have been right when only two miles, or one mile, away.

What would we think of a man that had but *one* answer to the question, How far is it to your city? no matter at what point the question was asked. We would think a machine might be made to do as well, would we not? But there are people who have but one answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" No matter how far the inquirer may be from salvation, or how near, the answer is the same in all cases: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Of course, it cannot be said that this is not a scriptural answer, for it is in the very language of Scripture. The trouble is that it is often given out of place. We can readily see how that it would be wrong to tell a man that it was three miles to your city when he was only a mile away, because some one had so answered him two miles further off.

Some of our religious neighbors have but one answer for the inquirer after salvation, no matter about his *condition*. It is, in all cases, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Thus they answer the unbeliever, and correctly, too; and thus they answer the believer, incorrectly, of course. To characters such as the jailor was they say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"; and in this they are right. To characters such as the instructed and convicted Jews at Jerusalem they say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"; and in this they are wrong, as Peter's answer to such persons clearly shows. Even to such characters as Saul was when Ananias went to him

they say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"; and that they are wrong in so doing the instructions of Ananias to Saul sufficiently show. Such believing penitents are often kept waiting and praying, taught and encouraged to expect some evidence directly from God that their sins are forgiven. If their imaginations are quick and easily wrought upon, they can be made to take their own feelings, raised to a high pitch by prayers, songs, and exhortations, as evidence of their pardon; and then, and thereafter, their assurance varies with the ebb and flow of the tide of feeling.

Thus persons are ofttimes kept in a state of alternating belief and doubt, hope and fear, for days, weeks, months, years—some all their lives—with no other evidence of their pardon than they can find in the quicksands of their own imaginations. This is sad, but true. It is almost needless to say to the readers of the *New Testament* that nothing of the kind was known in apostolic times. Then persons were promptly taught, according to their conditions, what to do to be saved, and how to come to the promise of salvation, and to rely upon that promise with all the assurance with which we may stand upon the immutable and immovable Rock. And so it should be now.

Happy feelings are not to be despised or disparaged, but they should be sought in the promises of God. Our feelings, however, are not evidence of sins forgiven. Our feelings follow our faith. If we

believe we are pardoned, we will feel so whether it be a fact or not. The apostles never taught persons to believe they were pardoned and then take their resultant feelings as evidence of the fact. Such teaching is as unscriptural as it is unreasonable. Remission of sins is promised to the baptized penitent believer; and if sinners were taught now, as they were by the apostles, to come to the promise of God, they would do so now as then, and go on their way rejoicing as happy, and more intelligently so than they can be by being persuaded simply to believe they are pardoned and to take their feelings as proof of the fact.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!" Certainly. But stop not there, trying to believe you are pardoned. "Go forward." "Repent and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." Then you may stand upon the promise of Him who, having all authority, said to His disciples, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believes and is baptized shall be saved," and with a confidence that will not be shaken by a world in flames.

All this only brings one to salvation, to the enjoyment of that salvation which is of God in Christ Jesus. Then, still, the watchword should be, "*Forward.*" To the person thus brought to the enjoyment of salvation, more can not be said in so few words than: "Besides this giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowl-

edge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. . . . For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLE OF CONVERSION

By BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

COMMENCING Acts viii:26, a report is found of the conversion of the distinguished officer of state, the treasurer of Queen Candace. The title given to this book, in the common version of the *New Testament*, is incorrect. It is not *the* Acts of *the* apostles, but only *some* acts, or transactions, of *some* apostles. Even "Acts of Apostles" imparts but feebly what is contained in it. This book is a history, by Luke, an evangelist of the Christ, of the election of Matthias to supply the vacancy occasioned by the apostasy and fall of Judas; the descent of the Holy Spirit; the endowment of the apostles with supernatural power, to guide them into all truth, in performing the great work of their mission; the first preaching, conversions, founding churches, setting them in order, visiting and encouraging them. In this book are found brief reports of preaching of apostles and first evangelists; and, from these reports, in a goodly degree, we were to learn *what* was preached, and *how* to preach.

When these reports are taken together and summed up, the amount of apostolic preaching is found in them. The length and breadth, the height and depth, of what is found here is what is to be preached now to convert and save sinners. To these reports the man who wants to know *what* to preach and how to preach must go. To these reports the man who wants to know *what* the apostles preached and *how* they preached must go. To these reports of apostolic and evangelical preaching, and conversions under that preaching, must men go to learn how men and women were converted. Here must they go to ascertain precisely what was preached to sinners, what effect it had on them, what they believed, what they were commanded to do, what it was to be done for, and what the Lord would do for them.

Here is the divine pattern for all preaching, in matter and manner, the pattern of all conversions, the example that occurred under the eyes of the apostles, with their direction and sanction. The preacher who is free, and has no purpose only to preach the Gospel precisely as it was preached at the first, and maintain it, will examine all the preaching reported in Acts, in all its parts, and maintain it. He does not have to inquire what this man or that man says, but continually inquires *what the Lord says, what the apostles say, and what they did.* With him that is *authority.* The examples, of which he finds record in Acts of Apostles, are *divine*

precedents with him. Every item he finds here he treasures up. What was preached once must be preached all the time. What men and women believed at that time, and in one instance, must be believed in every instance and at any other time. What they had to do in any one instance to become Christians had to be done in all instances.

The preacher bound up in some human system, so that he can not plant himself on the Lord's commission to his apostles, and follow the apostles as they went forth under that commission, learn and re-preach precisely what they preached, and who can not, when sinners inquire "What shall we do?" give the precise answer given by the apostles when the same question was propounded to them, in the same words, is not a *free man,* but is in *spiritual bondage.* It is, nevertheless, a lamentable truth, that a large proportion of the religious teachers of these times are thus bound up.

There is but one body of people in this country among whom the preacher of the Gospel can stand up boldly, plant himself on the commission which the Lord gave to the apostles, declare openly and independently that he will follow the apostles and preach precisely what they preached in all things—that men and women must now believe precisely what persons believed in the time of the apostles, do the same things and for the same purpose, in order to become Christians or to be saved; and when they come to the question "What shall we do?" give the

answer in the precise words of the apostle. How a man must feel straightened when he preaches to sinners till they are penitent and cry out "What must we do?" and is not tied up and bound that he dare not give an answer to this vital question in the very words of the inspired apostle and maintain that it is right! Yet thousands of men are thus tied up in spiritual bondage, and some of these think they are considerable men and *free,* but they never knew what it was to draw one free and spiritual breath.

In all kindness and with the utmost good feeling, permit an example or two to be introduced. Let a Baptist preacher take for his text the last commission given to the apostles, and tell his audience that he will, by the blessing of God, follow the apostles as they proceeded under that commission. Suppose him to follow up to the sermon of Peter on Pentecost, proceed honestly and faithfully to present everything contained in the discourse of Peter, and, at the close, some in his audience cry out, "What shall we do?" and he honestly and fairly proceeds, in the very language of the inspired apostle, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Suppose he would thus proceed on through Acts and present what was preached in every case, and the inspired answer, how long would he be received as a *sound* Baptist preacher? Not a month. The same

is true in the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, and every other church, except the one before alluded to. That "one body," "the body of Christ," requires a man to plant himself on our Lord's commission, follow the apostles, preach precisely what the apostles preached, and *nothing else.* When sinners inquire what they shall do, that body requires the precise words in answer to that inquiry to be given, and *nothing else.* It requires the "right way of the Lord" to be set forth, and no other, and requires the converts to walk in it.

It is delightful to stand in the "one body," looking to the one great Head of the Church, then, with no human system in the way, nor fear of man, when about to give the example reported, commencing Acts viii:26. The points to be considered in the investigation of this case are the following:

1. What did the angel of the Lord do in the case?
2. What did the Holy Spirit do in the case?
3. What did the preacher of Jesus do?
4. What did the officer do himself?
5. What did God do for him?

These are all plain matters of inquiry, and the young men and women should be able to explain them to the children in the Sunday school, as parents should to their children at home. But several things should be observed before proceeding with the examination, such as the following: If there shall be any thing found in this case, on careful examination, not agreeing with any man's views or

practice now, no one here is to blame for it. This case occurred before any one of this generation came into the world. Any one, then, differing from what is found in this case, must make his objection to the record made by Luke, or to the manner in which Philip the evangelist transacted his part, and not to any one now living. The case is taken, in this discourse, as it is found on the sacred record, and *assumed to be right.* Therefore, no effort is here made to prove any part of the transaction to be right, but the case is taken as an *authoritative* example, so far as the conversion is concerned.

1. What did the angel of the Lord do? He did not *directly* do any thing to the man to be converted. He did not go to the man to be converted, nor did he preach to him the Gospel; nor yet did he appear to him in a dream, a voice, some mysterious sight or sound. What, then? Why not go to him and preach the Gospel? The Lord did not call nor send angels to preach the Gospel, but committed that work to men. He ordained that *men* should be instrumental in saving *men.*

The angel went to the preacher—to Philip, an evangelist—and had but a brief message for him. He simply said to him, "Rise, and go toward the south, to the way that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert." This was the sum of the angel's mission in the case, so far as the record informs us. There is, too, something beautiful in the simple-hearted obedience of this ancient preacher.

There were several points which preachers generally want some light on, left entirely in the dark, after the angel had delivered his entire message. Such points as the following would occupy the mind of most preachers to some extent: Why send me down a way that is *desert?* Why not send me to some populous town, large city, and into the midst of the people?

Then, there was no light on another subject that sometimes comes into the minds of preachers. There was no light about the *pay,* who will foot the bill, pay the expenses of the tour, and the laborer for work done. On these points there was no light. Then there was no instruction what was to be done down that way. The Lord assumes absolute authority over His servant, and orders him to the spot where He has use for him, without informing him what he is to do. The servant of the Lord has to take it for granted that his Master understands His business, will order him to the right place, and find the work for him.

He, therefore, gives him the order to go. There is no intimation of his hesitating a moment, asking a question, or, in any way, taking any concern on himself about what was to be done, or the consequences. "He arose and went." This is an example of most *implicit obedience* on the part of the preacher. This ends all the angel had to do with the matter. When his work was done, the man to be converted was not touched. Not an impression

is made on him. He put the preacher in the way leading to the work to be done.

2. What did the Spirit do? He did not enter the man to be converted, go to him, preach to him, immediately impress him, change his heart, or convert him. He did not impress the man to be converted in a dream, in a strange noise or sight. Immediately, He did nothing to him in the way of regenerating him, or any thing of the kind. What, then, was his part of the work? As the officer approaches in his chariot, reading the prophetic Scriptures—the preacher, up to this point, not knowing that he is to have any thing to do with the officer, or that he had reached his divinely intended work—the Spirit of the Lord said to Philip, "Join yourself to this chariot."

This was an influence of the Spirit not easily mistaken. It was in open day. It was not an intangible and unintelligible operation that took effect in the flesh, and reached the understanding through the sense of *feeling,* but an intelligible utterance, in clear words, distinctly heard, understood, remembered, reported and incorporated in Luke's narrative, entitled Acts of Apostles. It impressed him that he should join the chariot, or, in modern style, made him *feel* like joining the chariot; but the feeling came from the knowledge of the requirement to join the chariot, but the knowledge of the requirement did not come from the feeling. The requirement came to the understanding embodied in intel-

ligible words, and the feeling followed, resulting from the knowledge.

This was the part directly performed by the Spirit, not on the man to be converted, but in bringing his conversion about. His part of the work was like that of the angel, not in changing the officer's heart, taking away his sins, or preaching the Gospel to him, but in bringing the man, when the Lord had sent to preach to him, in contact with him. This the Spirit did *by words.*

3. What did the preacher do? Before this matter is attended to, a curiosity, a strange thing demands attention. An officer of state, in great authority, having charge of the treasure of the Queen Candace, as he journeys, is seen reading the Scriptures. Though this occurred eighteen centuries back, it has novelty about it to any one of our time. What! you are ready to inquire, an officer of state, of immense power and distinction, reading the Scriptures? That is not the kind of reading indulged in by officers of state now. They glance over the political news, then pass over some cunningly devised and artfully conceived tale of love, of disappointment or triumph, of achievement or failure. True, there are some honorable exceptions, but they are the *exceptions,* not the *rule.* This man was not only reading the Scriptures, but the most appropriate scripture in the holy volume for him, the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Shall it be said that he was *accidentally* reading the scripture,

or was it not *providential?* At any rate, he was reading the following most graphic prophetic description:

"Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was on him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

This wonderful description, written seven hundred and fifty years before its fulfillment, is almost as graphic and full as the historical account of the same matter given by Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John.

As Philip approached him and found him reading this prophecy, he said to him, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I understand unless some man guide me?" He invited the preacher to a seat with him, which was accepted, and the chariot moved on.

This preacher was emphatically a *Gospel* preacher. Had he been of the type of some, getting into company with a distinguished officer of state, he would have taken the opportunity to have shown that he, too, was posted and deeply interested in matters of state, and they would have had a fine discussion of the civil affairs of the world. The officer would have seen that the preacher was more under the influence of the flesh than of the Spirit. But the preacher sent of God was not of that kind. He was a *preacher of Jesus,* and his soul was full of love to God and to his race. He had a divine mission, loved it, and did not forget it when an opportunity was afforded to do the work of his Divine Master. He immediately proceeded with his grand work without waiting for meeting-house pulpit, or a great audience; nor did he wait to *prepare* a sermon, to *write it out,* or *read it,* but "begun at the same scripture, and preached to him Jesus." He did not preach to him his opinion about Jesus, his views about Jesus, or the views of his brethren, but *preached to him Jesus.* How was that done? It was done as Moses was read. Reading Moses was reading the writings or the law of Moses. Preach-

ing Jesus is preaching the Gospel, or the good news of Jesus. It is not preaching some man's opinion of the Gospel, nor proving some man's opinion by the Gospel, or some creed, doctrine, or commandment of men, nor preaching *about* the Gospel, but preaching *the Gospel itself*—nothing else. It is complete in itself, the thing to be preached, the wisdom of God and the power of God.

This was the theme the preacher had in his heart, and the theme that dwelt on his lips, as he discoursed to the officer of the Queen Candace. He opened and began at the scripture the officer was reading, and showed him, no doubt, that the language of the prophet referred to had its fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth, and the transactions connected with His trial and crucifixion recently in Jerusalem. He had no modern doctrines to preach or prove. All he had to do was to bring his Lord before the officer and convince him that He was the promised Messiah—that He had come and fulfilled the prediction of the prophet. This work he did.

4. What did the officer do? He did not say he could not do any thing, nor did the preacher tell him that he could do nothing. The only way to ascertain correctly all about it is to follow the record carefully. The historian says:

"As they went on their way, they came to a certain water, and the officer said, 'See, here is water; what hinders my being immersed?' "

This is an important inquiry. It opens the way

for looking round in many directions. No man of intelligence can avoid thinking what would have been the reply if some preacher of the present time had been there instead of Philip. One sort would have brought him before a church to tell an experience, and give evidence that his sins were pardoned and he had obtained a hope, before he could have been immersed. Another class would have proposed to put him on six months' trial, and, if he proved faithful and "got religion," he could then be "baptized by immersion" if he desired it. But the unsophisticated Philip knew no such supplements, amendments, or improvements on the Lord's method of justification, but proceeding in a way divinely adapted to man, saying, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." When the officer heard this, without hesitation, he told Philip what he believed. Said he, "I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Do you say, "It is a great matter to believe with *all the heart.*" It certainly is, and no other kind of belief is of any value. "I thought you made a *bare assent* of the mind, faith and all the faith required," says one. In that you have been misled by misrepresentation and false statements. No man of intelligence ever taught that the Lord would receive any person to the ordinance of immersion, or to Himself in any way, on the bare *assent of the mind.* The requirement of the Lord is to believe with *all the heart.* But what is the meaning of that? It is the cordial, free, full, and cheerful

assent to the grand proposition, that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." It is like this:

You are in distress. A small amount of money will relieve you. You see two men of your acquaintance standing together, and apply to one, asking for the amount to relieve you. He listens to you, is slow to answer, and finally, but evidently reluctantly, replies, "I suppose I can let you have the amount." You see that it is not free, cordial, nor cheerful—that he would rather not do it and if another ounce were on the other end of the scale, he *would not*. That is the bare assent of the mind—no more. But the other man advances toward you, with an earnest look, and says, "Sir, I will let you have the amount you need with *all my heart.*"

Who can fail to see the difference? It is no bare assent of the mind in this latter case, but a cordial, free, and cheerful thing. He enters into the act with his heart. It does him good to do it.

How can there be an intelligent human being who can not, on becoming acquainted with the evidence, cordially, most freely and cheerfully, or, which is the same, with the whole heart or affections, believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? We are in a world of uncertainty, and liable in a single moment to be hurried out of it. Jesus is the soul of the Bible, the center, the grand embodiment of It. On Him it all rests. To deny Him is to deny it all. He is the light of the world, the way, the truth, and the life. Set Him aside, and not one ray of light

penetrates beyond the grave. All your friends who passed away from this world are covered in eternal darkness. When you shall sink into the grave, eternal night will brood over you. Not one ray of light have you, if you reject Jesus, in reference to all that have died. They have gone into an eternal oblivion. Well may you, then, with all your heart or affections, press the faith of Christ to your soul. "If you believe with all your heart, you may." "I believe," replied the officer, "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." On this grand fundamental and sublime statement the man of God received Him to the obedience of the faith.

The historian says, "He commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the officer and he immersed him." Owing to the captious, perverted, and caviling spirit of these times, some things must be noticed here that would not, under other circumstances, demand any attention. Some men, whose business it appears to be to darken counsel, instead of opening the way for the clear light to shine, and who yet claim to be called and sent to preach, have, in numerous instances, said that they could not tell from this history which one baptized the other.

To this it may be replied, that if any man has so little mind that he *can not* tell, after making an honest trial, which one baptized the other, he is simply not a subject of religion. Preaching can not do him any good. If any one who can easily see

which immersed the other, still tries to blind the weak and ignorant, by saying he can not tell, he is too insincere and uncandid to have any thing to do with any appointment of God. When one man inquires what hinders that he may not be immersed, and another informs him of the terms on which he may be immersed, and the history explains that the terms were complied with on his part, and "he immersed him," and a man persists in saying that he can not tell which one immersed the other, it is useless to waste time in talking with him. A man must have in him a *good* and *honest* heart before he hears the word. The officer inquired, "What hinders that I may not be immersed?" Philip says, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." He answers, "I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Giving the attending circumstances, the history says, "and he immersed him." There is no such thing as misunderstanding which one immersed the other.

But now attention must be given to the circumstances attending the case, and the peculiarity of the narrative. There is something very peculiar in this little piece of history. The Divine Spirit of all wisdom and all revelation appears to have looked down through eighteen long centuries and seen the little cavilers and caviling of these times, and to have employed such a class of terms and so arranged them as to leave no possible room for mistake. Open your book and look at the passage:

"And they came to a certain water." Where does that place them? "To a certain water," or "unto" it, as it is in the common version, is at the water, to the edge of the water. What followed after they were to the water or at it? The history proceeds:

"They went down." In giving a common history, this word "down" is not strictly necessary, for they could not have gone into the water without going *down*. Who went down? "Both Philip and the officer." In a simple narrative the word "both is not necessary. The word "they," used just before it, included *both*. But after this apparent redundancy, to be still more descriptive, and to put caviling out of the question, he adds the words "Philip and the officer."

Why all this particularity? Evidently to put *honest* misunderstanding out of the question entirely. They came to the water first, then went *down into* the water. Does some one say, that "into only means *to* or *at* the water?" That can not be, for they had already come *to* the water, and were *at it*, after which they *went*. *Went* where, after they were to the water, or at it? "They both *went down into* the water." They were already at the water; to it before they advanced beyond that point, or "both went down into the water." This placed them in advance of where they were—at the water or to it—which advanced position was "down into the water." They were now in the right position for

the performance of the act which the Lord commanded.

The commandment was not obeyed when they had gone "down into the water." What they had gone through was preliminary and necessary to the performance of the act commanded. Some little things must be noticed here, seeing that little men sometimes darken counsel with them.

1. It has been said that there was no water of consequence there—not more than a quart or two at the outside. How this precise information is obtained can not be explained here. But one thing is certain, and that is, that Luke's statement is true, that "they both went down into the water"; but they did not *both* go down into a bowl, cup, a quart, or a gallon of water, nor do sensible people think they did. This needs no argument.

2. "But there was no water in the desert." That can not be, for they came to "a certain water." The man who does not believe the narrative needs no baptism, nor is he a fit subject for baptism. It is *faith* that he needs. He must become a *believer* before he has any thing to do with baptism. The atlases teach falsely if there is no water there, for they were in the course of a stream of water more than a hundred miles in length, including its windings. Do you say "It was a water that went dry at some seasons of the year?" No matter if it was. It was not dry at the time the event in question oc-

curred, or they could not have gone "down into the water," nor "come up out of the water," as the history says they did if there had been no water there.

3. "But the apostles could not have immersed three thousand in one day," says an objector. What is to be argued from that? The assumptions run as follows:

A. That none but preachers could have immersed. This can not be proved, but stands as an unsupported *assumption,* and can not be reasoned from as a settled matter. B. There were no preachers present but the apostles. This is another unsupported assumption for which there is no proof. A short time before this the Lord had sent out seventy preachers besides the apostles. It is not in argument to be assumed that none of these were present on Pentecost, and reasoned from as a settled point. C. It is assumed that the apostles could not have immersed the three thousand in the given time. This assumption not only can not be proved, but can be clearly demonstrated to be false. The apostles alone could have immersed the whole three thousand in three hours. D. It is, then, assumed that, as immersion was impossible, the three thousand must have been sprinkled. But this by no means follows. There is no *sprinkling* in all this. The only thing attempted is to find something opposed to immersion. That is not done; but if it were, there would be nothing in it for sprinkling.

There is nothing in all that about sprinkling at all. Sprinkling is entirely out of the question. Independently of all that, sprinkling must be *found* and *proved*. There is not one word about sprinkling for baptism in the Bible, or in any thing written in the first three centuries.

What was the precise thing done while Philip and the officer were both in the water? In the common version it says "He baptized him." What does that mean? It does not say, he *baptized water on him*. It is a noticeable thing that we never read of baptizing *water*. The element used in baptizing is not the subject of the action, no matter whether it be water, fire, suffering, or Spirit. We never read of baptizing water, Spirit, fire, or sufferings *on* any person or thing. Where water is the element, and *sprinkling* is the action, the water is sprinkled on the subject. The same is true where *pouring* is the action. The Spirit was poured out, but not baptized. The persons were baptized, but not "poured out." Philip did not pour him out, but "baptized him."

Some modern teachers of religion, who draw more on their imaginations than on the authority of Scripture, have discovered, or thought they discovered, that the officer got the idea of being baptized from the expression "so shall he sprinkle many nations," in the last verse of the chapter preceding the one which he was reading. True, in the common version of the Old Testament we find the word

"sprinkle," but the officer was not reading the common version, but, in all probability, the Greek Septuagint, which does not contain the Greek word for *sprinkle* in the passage, nor any word meaning *sprinkle*, nor is there any thing about *baptism* in the passage in any translation or the original. It is simply "He shall *astonish* many nations." There is nothing about sprinkling or baptizing in the passage. The officer did not, therefore, find baptism in this reading, unless he found it where it was not, like our modern divines. He learned, in one of two ways, that he must be baptized.

1. He may have learned while in Jerusalem that all who became Christians were baptized.

2. In preaching Jesus, or the Gospel of Jesus, Philip may have preached it to him. No matter in which of these ways he learned it, the information was right.

We find, now, that he went *down into* the water, and, after the act in question, "they *came up out of* the water." What, then, did he do to him when "he baptized him?" This question can not be examined here carefully, but a few things may be set forth in a few words. There would have been no difficulty here had not the word "baptize" been left untranslated. It is a Greek word, and when it is correctly translated, the thing done is so clearly set forth that no one can misunderstand. It is simply, "he immersed him." There is no misunderstanding that. But the mere English reader is ready

to say, "How shall I know that your statement is correct?" By the following:

1. All admit that "baptize" is a Greek word.

2. There is no translation, no matter by whom made, in which it is rendered *sprinkle* or *pour*.

3. No scholar maintains that *baptize* should be translated *sprinkle* or *pour*.

4. No lexicon in common use defines *baptize* to mean sprinkle or pour.

5. There is not a trace of sprinkling or pouring for baptism in any thing written in the first two centuries, in the Bible or any other book.

6. There is not a more clearly established fact in history than that immersion was invariably practiced for the initiatory rite during the first two centuries.

7. There is not a more clearly established fact in history than that, after sprinkling or pouring came into use in case of weakness or sickness, that it was not regarded as regular baptism; but the subjects of it were not permitted to hold any office in the church.

8. The change from immersion to sprinkling or pouring is clearly admitted in all the authorities of any note.

9. Immersion was invariably practiced by all Christians, except the cases of weakness already alluded to, for the first thirteen hundred years.

10. Luther, Calvin, and Wesley admit that immersion was the original practice. The Romish and Greek Churches admit this.

11. The Greek Church, which has always spoken the Greek language, has immersed from its origin.

12. It makes sense to read immerse for baptize in every instance where it occurs. It does not make sense to read sprinkle or pour.

13. The figurative allusions to baptism, such as "buried with him in baptism," "born of water," "planted together in the likeness of his death," are admitted by all the authorities of any note to refer to the original rite—immersion.

14. Changes from the appointments of God are seldom from the easier to the more difficult, but are almost invariably from the more difficult and unpleasant to that which is easy and pleasant.

15. It is a notorious matter of fact, that but few if any who have been immersed, on a confession of their faith in Christ, ever doubt the validity of their baptism. Those who have received sprinkling for baptism frequently doubt the validity of their baptism and can not rest till they are immersed.

16. Persons in their last and most solemn moments, in the immediate expectation of death, frequently distrust the validity of their sprinkling or pouring for baptism, but no one has ever been known to distrust the validity of immersion, even in the midst of the solemnities of the approach of death.

There is, therefore, no doubt that when they were in the water *he immersed him.* This is precisely

what was done, and this is precisely what the Lord commands to be done now. "Repent and *be immersed* every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ," is the commandment.

What has appeared in the investigation may now be recapitulated, as follows:

1. The part of the work performed by the angel, in bringing about the conversion of the nobleman, was to send the preacher down the way leading from Jerusalem to Gaza.

2. The part of the work performed by the Spirit was to command the preacher to join himself to the chariot.

3. The part of the work performed by the preacher was to preach Jesus to the officer and immerse him.

4. The part performed by the officer was to hear the preaching, believe it, and yield himself to the Lord.

The repentance is not mentioned, but was unquestionably in its place, as he could not have believed "with all the heart" without the repentance. Repentance is present in every case. Not a man ever turns to the Lord without repentance.

5. The fifth and last part to be considered in this discourse, is what *the Lord did for him.* This part, like repentance, is not mentioned in Luke's account, but no one must infer from that circumstance that that part of the work was omitted, or that the Lord did nothing for him. From other

parts of the holy record it is clearly seen what the parts already found were in order to. He had heard, believed, repented, confessed, and been immersed. He passed through this process in order to justification or pardon. The Lord says, in the great commission, "He who believes and is immersed, shall be saved." This he had done, and thus came to the promise—"shall be saved," or pardoned. In accordance with the promise the Lord granted pardon. This was not something done *in him,* but *in heaven* for him. It was an act of God performed in heaven which freed him from all his past sins. This was one thing done by the Lord for him—*saved him from his sins.*

Another thing done for him was the impartation of the Holy Spirit. The Lord imparted to him the Spirit. This is omitted in the history. It is clearly shown to be the case from other Scriptures. The Gospel opened out with the assurance that the Holy Spirit was imparted as widely as pardon was granted: "Repent and be immersed every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and *you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*" This promise stands connected with pardon at the opening of the kingdom, and extends to all who receive remission of sins. This promise was, in his case, as in all other cases, fulfilled when he yielded to the Gospel of the grace of God. He received the Holy Spirit.

What is the last that is seen of him in the sacred

record? It is that "he went on his way rejoicing." What was the ground of his joy? Surely there was great reason for joy. When Philip met him, he did not know of whom the prophet was speaking in the scripture he was reading, though the prophet was pointing to the Savior of the world, His humiliation, His pouring out His soul even to death, and making His soul an offering for sin. Now he has the matter explained to him, that the prophet was speaking of the Messiah; that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah; that all that was described by the prophet was fulfilled in him. He believed with all the heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, has repented, confessed his faith, and been immersed into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. He has thus been adopted into the newborn family, received a full, free, and gracious pardon of all past sins, and received the spirit of adoption, whereby he can call God his Father.

Instead of the mazes in which he was before Philip preached to him, when he did not know of whom the prophet was speaking—whether of himself or some other man—he now has the clear understanding that he was speaking of the Messiah, of whom all the prophets spoke, who had now come in accordance with the prophesiers, lived the life assigned Him, died the death, risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, and been crowned Lord of all; that He had sent the Holy Spirit, inspired the apostles, enabled them to preach the Gospel, founded the

kingdom or Church, opened the door, and introduced many thousands into the new and living way—nay more, that he had received this faith himself, been translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, made an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ.

For the first time in his life, he saw that all the light of prophecy had culminated in the Messiah, and that the way to the Father was not only opened, but that he had entered by that way, and was not now simply a son of Abraham according to the flesh, but a son by faith, and heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ. His sins are to be remembered no more forever. The Spirit of God has now been imparted to him to dwell with him forever. "He went on his way rejoicing," as he had great reason to do, and, no doubt, carried the joyful tidings to his own country.

May we expect all these parts connected with every conversion now? So far as related to what the officer heard, believed, and did, and what the Lord did directly for him, all may be expected now. No man need wait for an angel to appear to a preacher now, and tell him which road to go to find him and preach to him. This part of the case transpired in the incipient period—the creative period—in which the supernatural was necessary in founding, unfolding, and confirming the new institution. So far as the work of the angel was concerned, it was miraculous, and forms no precedent for any other conversion. It may not be expected, nor neces-

sary, that an angel of the Lord should appear to a preacher and guide him to every man to be converted. So, the Spirit of the Lord speaking to Philip, and commanding him to join himself to the chariot, was miraculous, and not a precedent for every case. The preacher need not now expect to hear the Spirit say, "Join yourself to this chariot." That was a special act for a special case, in the age of miracles, and not a precedent in the general law for all cases. But the hearing of the Gospel, or being in some way brought to know it, believe it, repent, confess the faith, and be immersed into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit—the remission of sins, and the impartation of the Holy Spirit, belong to all cases of conversion alike. Not one of these items can be omitted in any case. They are not each one mentioned, in every case, in the holy record. But while every item mentioned in any one case really exists in every case, whether mentioned or not, no item can ever be omitted mentioned in any one case.

For instance, in the reference to the commission made by Mark, he does not give *repentance*. He says, "He who believes and is immersed shall be saved." But that does not prove that repentance can be omitted, in any case, in the justification of the sinner. In the words of Paul to the jailer, he said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Here repentance and immersion both are omitted. That does not prove that they

were left out in the case of the jailer, for he "took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes, and was immersed, he and all his, straightway." In the words of Peter, on Pentecost, faith is omitted. He said, "Repent, and be immersed every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

You are not to assume, because faith is not mentioned in this case, that it was omitted, or that they were saved without faith. It was present in their justification and performed its regular part, as it does in every other case. The reason Peter did not command them to believe was that they already believed. He had regard to their position, and commanded them not to do what they had done, but what they had not done—to repent and be immersed. In the words "the like figure whereunto even immersion doth also now save us," neither faith nor repentance is mentioned, yet immersion is nothing to any one without faith and repentance.

The conversion of the Ethiopia treasurer, therefore, in all that pertained strictly to it, was the same as any other conversion, aside from the work of the angel and the Spirit in guiding the preacher to and bringing him in contact with him. Apart from what the angel said and what the Spirit said to Philip, the process was the same as in every other case. The work of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, of the preacher, and of the man himself, was precisely

the same as in all other cases. The case forms a divine precedent. In the examination it will be found:

1. That he heard the same Gospel that is the power of God to salvation to every other person that believes.

2. That he believed the same Gospel that all are required to believe in order to salvation.

3. That he repented the same as all others.

4. That he made the same good confession as others.

5. That he was pardoned the same as all others who become Christians.

6. That the Lord imparted to him the Holy Spirit the same as He did to all others on their becoming obedient to the faith.

7. That he had the same ground for rejoicing as existed in all other cases of turning to God.

What remained for him after his turning to the Lord, was to be faithful till death; to be true and loyal to his new and glorious Sovereign; to fight the good fight; to run the race with patience; to continue in well-doing; seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, in order to the obtaining of eternal life. The Lord is reasonable and what He has laid down for us, in order to becoming Christians and living to His honor and glory, is clear, easy, and reasonable. If men and women are not saved, it will be their own fault. They are left without excuse, and have no cloak for their sins. Come, then,

be persuaded, by all His tender mercies, His love, His goodness and compassion by His long-suffering and forbearance, to turn and live. "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Come, then, to Him that loved you and gave Himself for you, and live forever and ever.

DECISION OF CHARACTER

By A. R. BENTON

A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.—Jas. i:8.

THIS remark of the Apostle has been selected for the purpose of setting forth the *Nature* and *Advantages* of Decision of Character.

Human life has often been compared to a voyage. Like a proud ship with all its sails set, or propelled by the mightier power of steam, freighted with the most costly merchandise, and the more valuable burden of human lives, admirable in all her appointments for a safe and prosperous voyage, so are we permitted to look on a human soul, just launched on the great ocean of life, about to make the voyage to an eternal world.

But, if while contemplating that ocean-bound vessel, as it passes from its moorings, heading away from the port of its destination, we should discover that the helm was wanting, that by some oversight, the means for controlling the motion of the ship had been neglected, with good reason would we fear for the safety of the vessel and all on board. In fancy,

we follow it, as it rolls unmanageably at the mercy of the waves, thrown from its course into intertropical regions, or dashed against icebergs in northern seas, and at last swallowed up in the abyss, with nothing to mark the spot of the catastrophe.

This is a brief and imperfect representation of that young man, who essays to make the voyage of life without the controlling principle, Decision of Character. The chart by which his course is to be taken, and the outfit for the passage may be perfect and complete, but without this Decision, all these will not avail, except by chance, to bring him to his desired haven. According to the figure employed by the Apostle in this very connection, he is like a wave of the sea, driven of winds and tossed. A wild fluctuation, an instability upon which nothing useful results, characterize the man devoid of decision. This oscillation of mind without progress, is not merely useless, but is positively pernicious.

To be unable to make up a decision on a matter in science, in philosophy or in morals, is virtually to have no mind at all, and for all practical purposes, instinct would be a more reliable guide. But just so far as the mind is trained to give its decisions with promptness, force, and correctness, in that same degree it becomes useful as a guide, and a source of happiness to its possessor.

It would be an easy task to show the essential relation of this *decisive* spirit to success in the secular affairs of life; and is it to be supposed that

its relation to our higher life—the life of principle—the life of the soul, is less important? To this higher exercitation we may perhaps be less disposed, but how, I ask, is it less our deep concern? If the interests of our immortal natures comprehend and subordinate all other interests, and contain them, as the greater contains the less, then the attainment of every lower good will be best secured by aiming at the higher good, and, figuratively, to hit the earth, it is best to aim at heaven. If then it may be assumed, that Decision of Character is vitally important in the secular employments of life, much more will it be valuable in our moral relations; or, in other words, Moral Decision gives tone, and imparts firmness and strength to character.

To recommend the cultivation of this decisive disposition of mind, on the grounds of Christian principle, is the object we propose in this discourse.

1. And first, in respect to the nature of this moral decision, I observe, that in a very important particular, it is different from mere firmness of character.

In the original constitutions of men, both moral and physical, a great diversity is found to exist. One is bold and forward, another timid and reserved; one is frank and confiding, another is prone to concealment and distrust; one is wavering and undecided, another is firm and decisive. Now this latter quality of firmness differs from moral decision, since it may never act in harmony with the dictates of

conscience, or be controlled by sentiments of duty.

This native heroism of the soul, as it may be termed, is as thoroughly compatible with injustice, cruelty, and oppression, as with any of the nobler attributes of the mind, and when linked to a revengeful and malicious spirit, it blossoms out into the most showy crimes, and ripens the most pestiferous fruit.

But in contrast with this mere, undiscriminating firmness, moral decision first takes counsel of conscience, and inquires into the law of duty, and then resolves in view of what is right or wrong in the case.

Without this *moral* element, firmness is obstinacy, a quality possessed by some brutes, but beneath the dignity of a rational being. Obstinacy is an instinct, moral decision is principle; the former is a degradation, the latter, a means of elevation.

2. In the next place, as an element of this decision of character of which we speak, I would mention *clear conviction.*

No one should infer from this statement that the attainment to clear convictions of duty, will necessarily insure decision of character, but no man can be practically decisive, without a strong conviction that he is in the path of duty. So long as that path is uncertain, timidity and irresolution will mark his hesitating footsteps. Like a benighted wanderer in the woods, uncertain whether his way lies to the right or to the left, fearing to go forward lest he go

further astray or fall into danger, he first hesitates, then doubts, and finally despairs. So the man with no clear convictions of duty palters with the most important concerns, and his efforts die away in languid and inefficient endeavors.

To the man who is conscious of acting without any clear convictions, and perhaps on this very account disheartened by the reflection that he may be acting contrary to the will of God, how paralyzing the thought. This is a moral opiate that benumbs all his executive faculties, and forever consigns him to the shelf of uselessness.

I do not pretend, that it is easy to arrive at assured convictions of truth and duty on all subjects, but be admonished of the impossibility of being prepared for resolute and persevering action, unless sustained by this firm conviction of which we speak.

But it must be obvious to all, if we are designed in our creation to act a part, and to act it well, then the principles which should govern us must be plain to every honest mind, and a clear conviction with respect to that *aura* courses along the muscles, and thus gives them tension and force, so clear conviction energizes all our decisions respecting duty; and imparts to them constancy and power. This is the germ from which the resolute and heroic virtues are produced.

3. The last element of moral decision, we mentioned, is Reliance on our Convictions.

The very first conception as it seems to me, which

we form of decision is, that we rely on our own perceptions, reason, or intuitions. These were manifestly designed to lead us to the cognizance of truth and duty; and the intensity of our moral decisions will have a fixed ratio to the reliance we bestow upon them. Hence, I am not surprised to hear the Savior declare, that if need be, a man must hate even father or mother, in order to be His disciple. Upon his own convictions, he must rely and act, though the tenderest ties be severed, and a man be ostracised from the amenities of domestic life. Reliance on the view, wishes, or practices of another fellow mortal, is contrary both to sound philosophy and true religion. The order of nature has been so disposed, that in making up our decisions respecting duty, we must rely at last upon our own perceptions, reason and intuitions. These original faculties of our nature are regarded as trustworthy and sufficient guides in tracing the attributes of Deity, and the credibility of the revelation which he has given to us. And if these are a court of ultimate appeal when we inquire into the loftiest subjects ever presented for the consideration of the human mind, surely, we may rely on them with unqualified security, when the questions pertaining to human duty are brought up for decision.

This leads me to remark, that the want of reliance on our convictions, and conformity to the moral standard of others, will most effectually scatter the forces of a man. No matter how clear a man's con-

victions may be, if he is not willing to trust them and follow them, he has withdrawn so much force from his own proper life. This is that element of strength in all those master minds that have left an eternal imprint of themselves on the ages. Such are reliant on their own convictions of truth; and like the Apostle Paul, when a great truth was brought home to his conscience, they confer not with flesh and blood. Henceforward, what they must *do* is their concern, not what people will think. To them a platform of principles is something to stand upon, and not a convenient something from which to step off.

It would be an easy thing comparatively, to live in the world if we might always follow the opinions and practices which are in fashion; but if we set up our own usurping views, the way of life will become hard and vexatious, since there will always be those who think they know what our duty is better than we ourselves know it.

If at any time, therefore, friends, you are tempted to throw away that reliance which rightfully belongs to your convictions, in the hope of securing some ephemeral and sordid advantage, be encouraged by the noble words of the great astronomer Kepler, who true to himself and the cause of science, thus wrote to his friend: "I keep up my spirits (at this time he was in great want) with the thought that I serve not the Emperor alone, but the whole human race—that I am laboring not for

the present generation, but for all posterity. If God stand by me and look to the victuals, I hope to perform something yet.'' Truly, this is the eternal type of that consolation which a relying consciousness of truth brings with it.

Having thus briefly described the *nature* of Decision, we now proceed to the consideration of the *advantages* which it insures.

1. A decided course is a *safe* course.

I apprehend that much of the moral indecision in the world, results from the lurking suspicion that somehow it is not quite *safe* to take a decided stand in favor of the right. No doubt, men would generally prefer to be right, rather than to be wrong, but yet they would like to be insured in case the right should fail. Though they would assent to the maxim that honesty is the best policy, yet it is not believed to be an insurance policy which will adjust all losses. Now, if we could be thoroughly assured, that it is altogether safe to be decided with respect to moral truth, and moral action, much indecision would be banished from the world.

It stands to reason that a course of moral decision must be a safe course, whether we regard this world or that to come. Is it not an obvious law of our being, that we shall be decidedly in favor of truth and right, and opposed to falsehood and wrong? And is it reasonable to suppose that God would make it our duty to obey this law of our nature, and then reward us for disobeying it? If

the Divine Lawgiver thus enacts and rewards infractions of His laws, He is arrayed against Himself, a thought so repugnant to the moral sense of every thinking being, that it can not be entertained for a moment.

But it is true—it must be so—that God's providential government is exercised in favor of right, and against wrong, and discriminates in favor of those who are decided in virtue, and against the vicious and depraved.

In the vegetable world, the sweetest flowers spring from innoxious plants, but flowers without fragrance and sweetness betray the plants that are pernicious. Such harmony and congruity belong to the fundamental laws of the vegetable world. Nor is the harmony of things less striking in the moral universe of God.

It can not be safe to poison the fountains of truth, and then attempt to slake our thirst therefrom, nor to adulterate the bread of life, and then seek to appease our hungering after righteousness.

In the very nature of the case, therefore, there is safety in a decisive course of moral action, since in this way a man drops into the current of God's providences, and is borne easily and safely by them, unimperiled by the eddies and counter-currents of a hesitating, and undecided course.

But the voice of History and Experience fully confirms the truth which is thus antecedently probable. Would it not have been *safe* for the mother

of our race, to give a decided dissent when an act of disloyalty to the command of God was first proposed?

Humanly speaking, what woes would have been averted, had there been the power on her part to utter the decisive No!! What a long and self-perpetuating train of ills has one act of indecision drawn after it! Contemplate all the unchronicled ills of the past, and the unrevealed miseries of the future resulting from this source, and then say, if it is not safe to be decided in favor of right and duty.

When led by his affection, Peter followed his master into the hall of the High Priest, thinking no doubt, that the Savior would deliver Himself in some way from His foes, as He was wont to do—and while he mixes in the crowd, hoping to escape observation, either his speech or perturbation betrays him, and a little damsel remarks, this is one of His disciples.

What penitential tears, what deep and poignant grief, what bitterness of soul, he would have escaped, had not his Christian decision of character deserted him! Under a load of almost insupportable shame and anguish, he went out and wept bitterly, when the enormity of his guilt flashed upon his soul from the mildly reproachful look of his Savior.

It would have been perfectly *safe* to confess discipleship to the Lord, though he had accompanied

the Master to crucifixion; but it was unspeakably hazardous to deny His name. This decision of character, which is so important in the highest concerns of life, and which is always safe, is equally safe in respect to all the minor interests of this state of being. These high moral interests subordinate and control all others, and what is safe here is safe everywhere.

2. Again, a decided course is the most *useful* course.

Were I to ask, why of two men with equal natural abilities, this one is more influential and useful in life than the other? in most cases the answer would be, the one has a decided character, and the other has not.

To be useful as a man in this commercial and enterprising age, one must possess this quality; and when on this stock you engraft integrity and Christianity, you have the fruitful boughs on which will cluster all the ripened virtues.

Moreover, to the student especially, is it useful to cherish this decided state of mind. No real progress can be made when effort is chilled by indifference and indecision. A feeble assent to demonstrated truth, a vague idea of some lurking truth in philosophy, or a nebulous, misty notion of the beauties of literature, is of no avail in the discipline or information of the mind.

There are persons who claim to be students that lack ligament. There is nothing to tie together their

faculties which are lying loosely around. They are like some kinds of cloth, so loose in texture that no amount of workmanship can make them into garments of any account.

Such learners would willingly—that is, they would not object to have some learning galvanized upon the surface in some easy way. But if the solid metal of knowledge must be obtained, as the real gold is toilsomely gathered by the miner, they turn away from such decided efforts with undisguised aversion. It is no easy matter "to gird up the loins of the mind" so as to think intensely and decisively on a given subject.

Absorption, too, is a method of acquiring knowledge that is greatly praised by loose and spongy minds. If knowledge could be imbibed as automatically as the sponge draws in water, then nothing would be more easy or delightful than the process of education. But I greatly fear that all these methods are impracticable, however desirable they seem to be.

Let me, then, commend to your earnest consideration the importance of decision of character in making attainments in knowledge. If you do not have a decided tendency of mind by nature, let it become yours by habit. Resolve to do nothing, except with decision. This is the fundamental principle of energy. With it you may fail, but without it you can not succeed.

But on another arena decision of character exerts

a wider and nobler influence. I mean by this, that the deeds which have been followed by the most useful and permanent results have been achieved by moral decision.

The communication of moral and religious truth, and its exemplification in life, is the most important work ever committed to men. For this purpose was the mission of the Son of God, and for this end the apostles and early martyrs labored. With them, all considerations of temporal policy and expediency, all temporizings and compromisings were made to bow before the commanding majesty of duty. What moral decision was that which could hurl *twelve* men, strong only in truth and the resolution it imparts, against the opposing hosts of the world in arms against them.

Trace the results of their heroic labors through the years of time and the cycles of eternity, and be instructed in the permanent and useful effects of Christian decision.

The multitude of examples that occur in illustration of this truth is so great as to distract choice, embracing that proud array of names enrolled on the lists of philanthropists, reformers, moral teachers, and inspired apostles of truth. But selecting one from the many, let us contemplate for a moment the moral decision of Moses, with its attendant train of blessings.

Reared in all the luxuriousness of a sensual and effeminate court, prospective heir to all the treas-

ures of Egypt, soon to grasp a powerful scepter belonging to the most renowned monarchy of ancient times, as the prospect of life is expanding before his view, he is called to make a most important decision —one in which the interests of millions are directly at stake, and indirectly the interests of the whole world.

The question is simply this, will he take part with the wronged and oppressed, be their leader and benefactor, or will he cleave to these glittering and attractive splendors of royalty? Benevolence is on the one side, selfishness on the other; here poverty, hardship, and persecution, there wealth, ease, and immunity from wrong.

Despite all these advantages held out to him as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he strangely "chooses to suffer affliction." Nothing but a genuine decision of character could have prompted him to adopt a course almost without a parallel. The wisdom of that decision, how loudly is it vindicated by the immense benefits that have inured to the whole human race.

Now, what is true with respect to the consequences of his moral decisions has been true, in some degree, in thousands of other cases. This principle, by whomsoever exhibited, always gravitates to the same general result of usefulness.

There can be no excuse for any man who turns away from rectitude for the sake of outward prosperity. If he sells his principles for secular pros-

perity, he will find in the end that its promises were all spurious. In public affairs, in commercial affairs, in social affairs, the course which carries with it the highest moral element is the safest, best, and most prosperous course.

3. In the third place a decided course is an *easy* course. Here we would not be understood as affirming that a man, in consequence of his moral decision, will not at times be subject to severe trials, or on the other hand, that by a timid and temporizing course, he may not sometimes avoid trials, but this —a man's decision of character will, on the whole, cause him less embarrassment than any other course in discharging the duties of life.

Decision is a piece of defensive armor by which temptation is most successfully warded off. Like the shield of Achilles it is of heavenly beauty and divine temper. When assailed by temptations to sinful indulgence, no protection is so reliable as the defensive one of decision. To barter this away for irresolution or hesitating indetermination is, like Esau, to sell a birthright for a mess of pottage.

Let a man, especially a young man, when the temptations of the world are spread out before him, show himself determined and able to resist them; let him, when solicited to the haunts of sin by wicked associates, exhibit a firmness of denial that no sneers or flatteries can shake, and let this be repeated, if necessary, a few times, and soon there will be occasion to repeat it no more; for at length, convinced

that their efforts will be unavailing, his tempters will retire from the fruitless contest.

But on the other hand, let a man, when plied with incentives to wrong-doing, only show himself half-inclined to yield; let him look with indulgence and no disfavor on courses of moral obliquity, and let him yield occasionally to the fascinations of questionable pleasures, that man is painfully and continually embarrassed, if not essentially lost.

Every yielding to the importunities of the unprincipled will encourage them to renew their demands, and it will not be strange if their attempts are continued until the victim is led step by step practically to apostatize from acknowledged duty, and eventually to place himself beyond all affinity for moral good.

It will be hard, without embarrassment and inconsistency, to conform to the low and variable standard of mere worldly maxims and practices; but comparatively easy to conform to the everlasting laws of Christian manner, piety, and purity, that can not be changed by any fluctuation of opinion.

Thus we have attempted briefly to indicate the *nature* of decision; that it is mainly composed of clear convictions, and reliance on our convictions, and we have endeavored to recommend a decisive course of moral life as the only *safe, useful* and *easy* course.

In conclusion, it seems almost unnecessary to add that this is also the course of happiness.

"Our being's end and aim, that something still which prompts the eternal sign," that ideal and intangible good, which we call happiness, can only be found in this direction. This must be so, because all experience and observation declare that a man is not to be judged happy by what befalls him in the outward circumstances of life, but by the spirit with which he bears the allotments of life. Milton has truly observed that

> "The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven."

Before, then, we can pronounce a man happy, we must know how he lives within, who are his thought companions, and what is his spiritual fare.

We are inclined to think the man happy who has a great deal, while at the same time, like Lucifer, he may be wasting away by strange combustion in the penal fires of a self-kindled gehenna.

Life will be like the material of which it is builded. If built of silver and gold, it will be hard, metallic life; if out of pleasure, an unsatisfied life; if out of passion and appetite, a boisterous and sensual life; but if of righteousness and truth, a happy and eternal life. A man's happiness consists not in the abundance of the things he possesses, but in his rich affections, his moral tastes, and in his comprehensive grasp of God's truth as impressed on all his works. To have decided predilection for all these moral conditions is to have a hold upon the

sources of human happiness, and without it a man is a starveling and a pauper in the midst of the greatest profusion and abundance.

Ye seekers after happiness, know ye that life—true life—is not made up of externals, but of the states of the soul, and in walking across this narrow bridge of time, if your look is bent downward upon this world you shall grow dizzy and fall; but if your eye is steadily and decidedly fixed on the shore of the eternal world, you shall walk straighter here, and be more sure of reaching the other side in safety.

THE COURSE TO PURSUE TO BE INFALLIBLY SAFE

By BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Text.—"Enter in at the strait gate."—Matt. vii:13.

IT IS a circumstance not to be denied, that immense confusion exists in the public mind touching the way of salvation. No matter whether the cause of this confusion can be pointed out or not, the fact of its existence can not be denied. It is also a fact that many men of good character, fine intelligence, and who are excellent citizens, are standing aloof from all connection with any church, or identification with religion in any form. No doubt, a main cause of this is that a large amount of the preaching is either insipid, lifeless, and powerless *talk*, and nothing more, or wholly unintelligible; so that, on one hand, there is no interest in it, and, on the other hand, they can not understand it. No matter whether the fact can be accounted for or not, it is a fact, and an indisputable fact, that darkness pervades the public mind on the very matter of the highest importance to man of all others—the way to

eternal happiness and renown. It is useless to try to blur it over, to disguise or deny it. There stands the stumbling-block before the people. One teaches this way and another that; one says, lo here, and another, lo there. Many stand confounded, and know not which way to go.

Turning to the clear teaching of the Savior, the command is found: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." This is a candid and solemn warning, and shows that the Lord saw the narrow way in which His followers would have to walk to gain everlasting life. A speculative man, more interested in some perplexing question than in regard to his own salvation, and, probably, desiring to procure some means of prejudicing the public mind against the Lord's teaching, came to the Savior and said, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" The Lord gave him a more extended answer than he desired. He said:

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in

thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." Luke xiii:24-27.

The Lord warned the people to be on their guard; to be careful and not be deceived. You can not determine which is the right way by the multitude walking in a way, for many are walking in the broad road, leading to ruin. An important reason for being cautious that no mistake be made in finding the right way, is that each person is to make but *one trip*. If you were to travel the road many times after missing the way once, you might avoid the mistake next time. But we pass over the way but once, and if we miss it, the mistake can never be corrected. All should make sure work of it, and be certain *not to miss the way.*

In the midst, then, of all the confusion of these times, the different ways held up to the people, as leading to heaven, is there any possible course that a human being can pursue that is infallibly safe? The purpose of this discourse is to give an affirmative answer to this question—to show that *there is a course to pursue that is infallibly safe.* The labor of this discourse will not be to refute those opposed to the positions maintained, but to show an honest and humble person what course to pursue in the midst of all the confusion of the times to be infallibly safe. In order to this end, a few of the most serious difficulties existing will be handled and dis-

posed of in such a way as to show the safe course.

What, then, is the first difficulty to be encountered? It is the difficulty between the infidel and the Christian. A man says: "I have read Hume, Voltaire, Volney, Gibbon, Paine, etc., and you admit that some of these were, at least, men of learning, extended knowledge in antiquity, with vast libraries and time for reading; and they maintain stoutly, and most determinedly, that the Bible is the work of man, and nothing else; that they have no confidence in it. On the other hand, I have read Paley, Watson, Faber, Nelson, Barnes, etc., men of learning, vast knowledge, antiquity, immense libraries, with any amount of time for research, and they say that the Bible contains a revelation from God, and that the man who does not believe it will be condemned. Now, if these great and learned men, on each side, can not decide the matter, settle the question, and put it beyond dispute, how am I ever to decide the matter? If any means were at command by which this difficulty could be made to appear more difficult, such means should be employed, as the intention is to meet the difficulty itself, and not to demolish a man of straw."

Now, do not forget the purpose had in view—to show what course to pursue to be *infallibly safe*. To what danger is the man exposed who believes the Bible with his whole heart, and honestly practices it, in any conceivable event? To say the least, the man who believes the Bible, and practices its

teaching, is as good as the unbeliever. He is certainly as happy. Beyond all dispute, he does as much for his race as the unbeliever. So far as this world is concerned, he is certainly infallibly safe in any possible or conceivable event. Nor does any man doubt that he is infallibly safe so far as the world to come is concerned.

Conceive the idea, if you please, that, in the final winding up of human affairs, it were possible for every one to turn out as the skeptic has argued; the Bible to be entirely of man—as Robert Owen argued, all religion founded in ignorance; to what danger is the man who honestly believed and obeyed the Bible exposed? Conceive the possibility, if you please, for every thing to turn out finally as the skeptics have argued, and the Christian to have honestly believed the Bible with his whole heart and practiced it faithfully; to have preached it, written it, published it, and advocated it with all the power in him, through his entire life, and to have opposed infidelity, fought against and done every thing in his power to put it down, to what danger will he stand exposed, living or dying, in this world or that which is to come? No danger of any sort.

No man living can show that he has lost any thing that can in any way contribute to greatness, goodness, or happiness in this life, and the skeptic himself will not claim that he has endangered himself in reference to the life to come. No man of any sort, no matter where he stands, nor what he holds,

maintains that any great danger can befall a man on account of his believing and practicing the Bible; that he is, on this account, in any sense, not safe for this world and that which is to come, even if all the skeptic claims could, by any conceivable event, prove true. If, in the end, he shall find that all he believed concerning God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, angels, and men—in one word, all he believed about the Bible—to be true, he will be an eternal gainer; he will have gained all things. But if you conceive the possibility of his being entirely mistaken, and the skeptic right in every particular, he is then as safe as any skeptic on earth, living and dying, in time and eternity. You may confidently defy any skeptic to show that he is not infallibly safe in any event.

But, now, turn round and look at the other side of the question. Let the skeptic prove mistaken, and look to the consequences of his mistake. He finds himself, in the end, standing in opposition to his merciful Creator, who has, in kindness and compassion, put forth His hand to save him; opposed his gracious Redeemer, who died for him, and to the Bible, intended to guide him to happiness and eternal glory. He believed not the God who created him, and the Lord who gave Himself for him.

The sentence is, "He who believes not shall be condemned." "He who believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." He knows that his skepticism can not possibly make

him any better in this life, any more happy; that it can not do the world any possible good; that it has nothing in it to elevate, ennoble, and adorn humanity; that it can not possibly bring any thing great and good to a single soul of the human race; that it can not civilize, educate, or enlighten mankind; in one word, that its whole tendency is to pull down morals, education, and enlightenment in general; and if all it claims could, by any conceivable event, prove true, every believer in the Bible would be as safe in all respects as he for time and eternity!

Skepticism is an awful experiment. It is simply taking the risk of losing every thing, without the possibility of gaining any thing for this world or the world to come.

It is like this: A father tells his son that he has ten thousand dollars to set him out in business; to select the business and he will give him the money. The son goes out, looks around, and comes home delighted; he has found a grand speculation, and calls for the money. The father calls for an explanation of the speculation. The young man sets it forth with much eloquence and fluency. The father listens to him with deep interest, and, when he is through, calls his attention to a certain point in the speculation, and inquires what the result would be should he be mistaken at said point.

The young man's countenance falls. He admits that he had not thought of that; that a mistake there would involve the loss of the whole ten thou-

sand dollars. In a few minutes his father calls his attention to many points, at any one of which a single mistake would involve the loss of all his money. His father then turns to the other side and inquires for the result, in case there shall be no mistake, and finds that the best that can possibly be the result, in any event, will be to come out with the amount with which he started in. "What!" says the father, "a speculation in which there are many chances to lose every thing and no chance to gain any thing! No, sir; you can not have the money." This is the speculation of skeptics. They not only have many chances to lose every thing without any chance to gain any thing, but are certain to lose all, and have no chance to gain any thing in any possible or conceivable event.

Well may skeptics say, "It is a leap in the dark." Shall a man of intelligence make such an experiment, take such a risk, when he can be infallibly safe? It is infallibly safe to believe the Bible with the whole heart and practice its teaching. This no man denies. This is indisputable. It would be exceedingly strange if that which is infallibly safe were not infallibly correct.

Why is it that such a large proportion of skeptics, when near the close of their lives, or are in the immediate expectation of death, renounce and repudiate their skepticism? Why does their foundation fail them at the very time when they need support more than at any former period? Why is it that,

at the gate of death, so many of them renounce what has been upon their lips for years? Why is it that the most impudent scoffers, bold and ridiculing unbelievers, in such large proportions, when they approach the change of worlds, repudiate, frequently with their last words, the unbelief that has dwelt upon their lips for years?

Why does the meekest believer in the kingdom of God press his faith to his heart the more closely as he approaches death? Why is it that not a man who claimed to believe the Bible, while in life and health, ever denied it when he approached death? The answer is, that the divine testimony is sufficient for all confidence, worthy of all acceptation; and the human soul, at the hour of dissolution, when it needs support, leans on that which is infallibly safe, as also infallibly correct.

It matters not, then, whether you can remove all the difficulties skeptics can produce, answer all their questions, or understand all their subtleties or not; they can point the honest believer to no danger to which he is exposed, no serious consequences that can result from his faith in any conceivable event. To believe the Bible, then, and practice its teaching is infallibly safe for this world and the world to come.

Does some man reply that this is no refutation of skepticism? It does not propose to be, but shows you what course to pursue to be infallibly safe, whether you can refute skepticism or not, or even

whether you can understand it. It has nothing in it good for you in any conceivable event, whether true or false, and it is useless to trouble your mind about it.

"Well," says a man, "I supposed you could dispose of the difficulty so far as skepticism is concerned; but I have a difficulty beyond that. My difficulty is among the preachers. For instance, one man says he can prove, clear as holy writ, that all mankind will finally be made holy and happy; quotes Scripture; talks of Latin, Greek, Hebrew; of lexicons, concordances, and exegesis. Another man argues that 'the wicked shall be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God.' I find that there are men of learning and talent on both sides; men of reading and books; and if they can not settle the question, and show who is right, I do not see how I am ever to settle it."

There is not much difficulty in that case. If the man was here who says he can prove so clearly that all will be saved, it would be well to ask him a few questions, such as the following: Do you not admit that all mankind ought to believe the Bible and honestly obey its teaching? He would reply, Certainly I do. Is not the man who believes and obeys the teaching of the Bible as happy as any one in this life? He will answer, Certainly he is the happiest man in this world. Very well; will he not be happy in the world to come? Undoubtedly he will, he will readily reply, for all will be saved in the world to

come. Then, being yourself the judge, all who believe the Bible, and obey its teachings, are infallibly safe for this world and that world to come. He will reply, Certainly they are.

But what if a man does not happen to believe the Bible and obey its teachings in this life? *He is not safe,* and no argument can make him safe. He stands on doubtful ground, while he might stand on safe ground. He takes a risk, while he might have a certainty. He admits that all who believe and honestly obey the Bible are safe—infallibly safe. This nobody denies. All men can, then, believe the Bible and obey its teachings, and thus be infallibly safe. Conceive the idea, if you can, that it could possibly turn out that all men will be saved, the man who believes the Bible and obeys its teaching will be saved. Those who believe the Bible and obey it are infallibly safe in any conceivable event.

"But," says a man, "one preacher says, 'God unchangeably foreordains whatever comes to pass,' and that the number of the 'elect is so definite that it can neither be increased nor diminished'; and another says, Christ died for all, and that all *can* come to Christ and be saved. Now, if those preachers themselves can not settle this matter, and show who is right, how can I ever decide it?" Suppose you never should decide that matter in this life, might you not still be happy for this world and that which is to come? Explaining these intricate matters, while it may be some satisfaction to the

curious, will never save one human being. It would have been transcendently better for mankind if such subtleties had never been started. Men have gotten much credit from the people for starting, handling, and seeming to know of such matters, as men of learning, depth of thought, and wonderful genius; but they have, to an alarming extent, confused the world thereby and obstructed the way of salvation. They have involved millions of our race in utter confusion.

But now, what is to be done? Is there any clear course that can be pursued to avoid all this? There certainly is; and that course is not to try to settle these intricate questions, nor even thoroughly to understand them. It is much shorter and easier than all that. It is obvious that the apostles preached the Gospel to all wherever they went. They approved those who believed and obeyed, and disapproved those who did not believe. The grounds of condemnation are various. Not more than two need be mentioned now. *Unbelief* is a ground of condemnation: "He who *believes not* shall be condemned." *Disobedience* is mentioned as a ground of condemnation: "The Lord will take vengeance on those who know not God, and *obey not* the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Gospel is, then, the only thing to be preached. It is to be preached to all nations for the obedience of faith. It is infallibly safe to preach the Gospel to all men, for all men to believe it and

obey it. In any event this is safe. If it could possibly turn out that "God did unchangeably ordain whatever comes to pass," and that the number of "the elect is so definite that it can neither be increased nor diminished," those who believe the Gospel with all their heart, and obey it, are certainly as safe as any body. It can not possibly make the matter any worse for them to have believed and obeyed the Gospel in any event. They are infallibly safe in their belief and obedience. Even if Calvinism should prove true, and they should turn out non-elect, their condition is by no means worsted by their belief and obedience. This is infallibly safe for all men: to make the best effort possible to *know* and to *do* the will of God. If this is not safe, there is no safety. We must live and die in uncertainty. But it is safe—infallibly safe. The strongest Calvinist admits that it is right to preach the Gospel to all. It is right for all to believe the Gospel. It is right for all to obey the Gospel. There is nobody, who believes that the Bible came from God, that does not admit that it is right to believe and obey its teaching. This is infallibly right, as all admit. That which is infallibly right is, beyond all doubt, infallibly safe.

Another man says: "I have a difficulty beyond all you have mentioned, that I know not how to settle. It is this: One preacher maintains that baptism is essential to salvation; another, equally learned, denies it. If learned preachers, on each

side of this question, can not settle it, and thus end the controversy, how am I to decide who is right?'' That may appear puzzling to a man at first thought, but a little reflection can open a clear path to any man who is simply looking for a safe course to pursue. There is much in shaping questions. The teacher who desires to keep the public mind clear, states all his positions and questions with a view to that end. The man who desires to mystify, confuse, and perplex the public mind, frames his questions and takes his position with a view to that end. Now, why should any one discuss the question whether baptism is essential to salvation? Why discuss the question whether any thing the Lord has commanded is essential? All such questions have their foundation in disloyalty to the divine government. There is a much easier method of investigation than this, and more satisfactory. There is no need of starting the question whether baptism is essential to salvation.

Do you inquire for the simpler and easier way of arriving at something satisfactory and safe? Then start with the inquiry, Is baptism a commandment of God? All parties of any note respond, Certainly it is a commandment. About this there is no dispute of importance. It being admitted that baptism is a commandment of God, the next question is simply this: Is it right to obey the commandment of God? Here, again, there is but one answer. All admit that it is right. Is there any man of any note

that does not admit that? So far he is safe. But what if he is not baptized? He, then, does not obey this commandment, and is not thus far safe. But there is no necessity for this. If all agree, as all of any consequence do, that baptism is a commandment of God, it is infallibly right to be baptized; and, if infallibly right, beyond all doubt infallibly safe. This is all a conscientious man wants. He only wants to know what is right and safe, and this is right and infallibly safe.

"But many good people have died without being baptized, and must I believe that they will not be saved, simply because they were not baptized?" says one. No, sir; that is taking unnecessary trouble on yourself. No one says you *must* believe that. Belief is not in what *will not be*. Belief is not negative, but affirmative. Belief is not that something will *not be*, but that something *is*, or *will be*. In certain cases you may lack the evidence that persons will be saved. Where you have not the evidence to believe, you do not believe. It is not the same not to have the evidence to prove that a person will be saved, as to have the evidence to prove that one will be lost. It is not the same not to believe a person will be saved, and believe one will be lost. In the one case you tell what you believe; in the other, you tell what you do not believe. But the matter in hand is not to settle the question of being saved or lost, so as to say with certainty precisely who or how many will be saved or lost. The matter is to de-

termine *what is right*, and *how to do it*. The commandment is baptism, and it is right to obey it. Those who are baptized do right. Those who do right are safe.

But since so much is said about baptism being essential, it may be well to inquire how essential the popular churches in this country make it? The Episcopalian Church makes it so essential, that you can not get into it without what it calls baptism. If the salvation of the Lord is in that church, no one can get that salvation without what the church calls baptism; for, without that, no one can get into the church at all. The same is true of the Presbyterian Church. No one can get into it at all without what it calls baptism. Essential or not, they will not receive a man without it. There is no Presbyterian salvation without baptism. The same is true of the Methodist Church. There is no "full membership," as the Methodist friends phrase it, without what the church calls baptism. The same is true of the Baptist Church. There is no salvation for any body in the Baptist Church without baptism, for there is no admittance without it—no membership. If the salvation of the Lord is in the Baptist Church, no person can obtain it without baptism. Whatever salvation the Baptist Church has for the human race, or blessings of any sort, baptism is essential to all there is in it. No man can obtain present or future salvation, or any blessing from the Lord in the Baptist Church, without baptism. Baptism is essential

to Baptism communion, and to every thing else in the Baptist Church.

How essential, then, is baptism in the kingdom of God! It is so essential that you can not get into the kingdom without it. "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," says the great Head of the Church. The kingdom of God, here, is the Church. "He who believes, and is immersed, shall be saved," says the Lord. "Repent, and be immersed, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." "Go, therefore, and disciple all nations, immersing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you."

"We are all baptized into one body." Such is a sample of the expressions used in Scripture, sometimes connecting baptism with remission of sins; in one instance with induction "into the name," one instance with induction "into one body," one "into the kingdom of God," and there is also an instance where we read of baptizing into Christ, or induction "into Christ." These expressions all, in amount, are the same. "Into the name," "into the kingdom," "into Christ," "into one body," and "for the remission of sins," in substance, all amount to the same. If a man is in the name, he is in Christ, in the body, has the remission of sins, is in the

Church, in the kingdom. So, if a man is in the kingdom, he is in the body, in Christ, is in the name and is pardoned.

There is not an intimation of any man being in the Church, in the time of the apostles, without baptism. Where is the ground, then, for disputing about baptism being essential? If it is the initiatory rite of the new institution, none was in the first Church without it, and none is admitted into any church now, of any note, without what the Church calls baptism, where is the ground for the dispute about its being essential? There is no ground for this skeptical dispute. All admit that it is a commandment of God, and that it is right to obey the commandment. Then, let all do what they admit to be right, and they will be safe so far as baptism is concerned.

"I have another difficulty about baptism," says a man. "One preacher says nothing but immersion is baptism; another says sprinkling or pouring will do as well—that he would as soon have sprinkling as any thing. I find that there are strong, talented, and learned men on both sides of this question, and if the preachers can not settle it and decide which is right, how am I to determine what to do?" There need be but little dispute about that.

Who denies that immersion is valid as the initiatory rite? The whole Romish Church admits not only the validity of immersion, but that it was the original practice. The Greek Church has practiced

immersion from the beginning. The Episcopalian Church admits that immersion was the original practice. The Methodist Church had endorsed immersion in its creed, its standard works, and its occasional practice, from the commencement of its existence. The great historians, John L. Mosheim, Neander, and Wall, admit the validity of immersion, and that it was the original practice. There is not a better authenticated fact in history than that immersion was the invariable practice for the first two centuries, and, from the commencement of sprinkling or pouring in the third century, the invariable practice for the first thirteen hundred years among all Christians, except *clinics*, or persons supposed to be too weak to bear immersion; but, in these cases, they were never permitted to hold any office in the Church, because their baptism was not considered *regular*.

Luther, Calvin, Wesley, and more than three hundred others, whose names appear in the quotations from the learned authorities on this subject, of the most distinguished religious teachers that have appeared in the last three centuries; reformers, critics, commentators, historians, and translators, in one form or other, have committed to writing, and left the testimony, that immersion was the original practice and valid. You will inquire, then, why so many of them sprinkled? They did it, not on the ground that there was any authority in the Bible for sprinkling or pouring, but on the ground that

a change in *the form* would not vitiate the ordinance if they retained the *substance*. They admitted the change from the original practice—immersion to sprinkling or pouring—to accommodate the ordinance to supposed cases that might occur in cold countries, or where water would be difficult to obtain, and cases of weakness where they could not bear immersion, arguing only the law of *expediency* for it, but claiming no divine authority for the change.

This has been the ground all the time taken by all who practiced sprinkling or pouring at all, till within the past fifty or seventy-five years. More recently a class of men have arisen, less enlightened and far less scrupulous, who talk about proving sprinkling or pouring by Scripture, and talk of different *modes* of baptism. A few religious adventurers are now found who care nothing for the authority of history, critics, commentators, lexicographers, translators—and, probably, many of them *know* as little as they *care* about these authorities—who deny immersion outright as having any authority in the Bible or anywhere, and utterly refuse to immerse at all. But these are no guide to any body, nor are they to be reached by any weight of authority or argument. They are what they are, because *they are,* and *intend to be.* These irresponsible men are the only exception to the universal proposition, that immersion has been received as valid by all Christians; that it has never been in doubt or dis-

pute. Up to this time there has not been a debate on the simple question, Is immersion baptism? On this question the friends of immersion are ready and willing to affirm all the time. But no man of learning and reputation is willing to deny this in discussion.

The validity of immersion remains unquestioned by any thing deserving the name of authority, and is sanctioned by the weight of all historians, critics, commentators, lexicographers, translators. No matter what you may think of sprinkling or pouring, there is no question about immersion. It has never been in dispute nor doubt. It remains unquestioned and unquestionable, so far as men of learning and reputation are concerned. Those who receive immersion are satisfied, living and dying. Their minds are at rest about the ordinance. They never hear any preaching that unsettles their minds. Their conscience is at rest so far as baptism is concerned. They have no doubt about it, living or dying.

This is not the case with those who have received sprinkling or pouring for baptism. Their conscience is not at rest. Many of them live in continual doubt and perplexity about their baptism. They are continually hearing preaching, or reading books or tracts, such as unsettle their minds and fill them with doubts and confusion. Their preacher visits them, prays with them, talks with them, brings them tracts and books to read, and preaches on baptism. In this way he occasionally pacifies them for the

time being, but again they hear some one quoting the admissions of the learned authorities, that immersion was the invariable practice of the original Church; and that "buried in baptism"—Col. ii:12—and "buried by baptism"—Rom. vi:4—and immersion comes into the mind in spite of all efforts to keep it out. The mind is again unsettled more than ever. The minds of many of this class are unsettled in death, and they go thus unsettled and in doubt into the presence of God.

What, then, is the safe course to pursue? Undoubtedly, to practice that which never was in doubt; that which never was in dispute among great, good and pious men. "Go," according to the Scriptures, "to a certain water," where there is "much water," to "down into the water," be "buried in baptism," come "up out of the water," and the controversy is ended so far as you are concerned. Touching this institution, your soul is at rest. This is infallibly safe. No matter what they can prove about sprinkling or pouring, your baptism stands unquestioned and your conscience is at rest. It may be illustrated in this way:

You owe a man fifty dollars, and show him a fifty-dollar bill on some private bank, admitting that many to whom you have showed it say it is counterfeit; but you add that you have shown it to others, who say it is good, and they would as soon have it as any. You show him another bill, making similar admissions, at the same time asserting that you

would as soon have either as a ten-dollar greenback, and lay this last-named along side of the others, proposing to the man to take his choice. Do you suppose you would find a man in fifty miles round green enough to take either of the doubtful bills when one about which there is no doubt is offered? No, sir; in matters of this kind you take nothing doubtful when you can get that which never was in doubt.

What would you give for a farm with a doubtful title? No matter if three-fourths of the attorneys in your acquaintance would declare the title good, and only one-fourth declare it doubtful, you would not have it. Use the same good sense in your acts of obedience to God. Do nothing that is doubtful as an act of obedience to the Lord, when you can do that which was never doubtful. If you are aiming to please God be certain and do that which all of any note admit to be valid, and leave the doubtful. This is infallibly safe. Be immersed on a confession of your faith, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and you will have no more trouble about baptism.

"But there is a difficulty about the operation of the Spirit. The preachers do not agree on this subject; and, if the preachers can not settle this question, how am I ever to decide who is right?" says some one.

Could you not be a Christian and be saved if you never do settle that question, or if you never can de-

termine who is right? The operation of the Spirit, whatever it may be and however it may be, is something that you are not to perform yourself. Whatever men may say about it, there is one thing about which there is no dispute, and that is, whatever influence God may please to exercise is from Himself and not from man, and He will exercise it, and that, too, whether men understand how He does it or not. No matter whether men understand how the Lord raises the water into the atmosphere, and causes the rain to descend or not. The Lord sends the rain. No theorizing about it, on the part of men, hinders or accelerates the rain. In the same way, no theorizing of men hinders or accelerates the influence of the Spirit. When men must do, they, of course, must know *how* to do it. That which the Lord does Himself, He knows how to do it, and will do it, in His own way, whether men theorize correctly about it or not.

Preaching theories about the influence of the Spirit, or the operation of the Spirit, may sound religious to those who do not understand the matter, but there is nothing in it to save a single human being. The thing for man to do is to listen to the word of the Lord, believe it with the whole heart, and do what the Lord commands. This is the best man can do. It is all that he can do. If he believes all the Lord has said, and makes every effort in his power to do all the Lord requires, the Lord will do every thing right on His part. The matter for man

to do is to exercise faith in God that He will do His part, in all things, faithfully, whether man can understand how He will do it or not. All should come to God in full assurance of faith, all confidence that He is able and willing to do all things well—to do all for man that he needs—to save his soul. The Lord will do His part whether man understands *how* He will do it or not. It is faith men need—confidence in God that He is able and willing to do for man more than he asks or thinks, whether he understands how the Lord will do it or not. It is not theories about the influence of the Spirit that man needs, but *faith* and *obedience* to the commandments of God. There is no threat against any man because he does not understand any theory about the influence of the Spirit, but there are terrible threats against the *disobedient* and *unbelieving*.

"Some preachers say that justification is by faith only, and others say it is not by faith only. I know not how to decide," says one. What if you never do decide? You know that it is commanded to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Then, it is clearly right to believe. So far, there is no difficulty. You know that God has commanded all men everywhere to repent. Then, it is right to repent. So far, the way is clear. Baptism is commanded: "Then Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Then, it is right to be baptized. So far, the way is clear. It is always safe to do what you know to be right. You know it is right to believe with

all your heart. You know it is right to repent. You know it is right to be baptized. Do what you know to be right, and you are safe so far as these matters are concerned. Then, if it should turn out that justification is "by faith only," you are safe, for you have the faith. There will be no disappointment, only that you were justified a little sooner than you thought you were. You will certainly not regret that you obeyed the commands to repent and be baptized. But if you should stop at faith, and find that justification is not "by faith only," you would find yourself still not justified. It is, then, infallibly safe to believe, repent, and be immersed. So far, there is no difficulty where the desire is simply to *do right*—to *be safe.*

"But there are so many creeds, all claiming to be right, that I should not know which to take. They were all made by learned men, and if they can not agree on the kind of a creed, how am I to decide which is right?" says one. It is a matter of great moment and of much relief that, aside from all these conflicting, clashing, and erring creeds, there is one book that all parties concede is right. They all agree that the Bible is right—that it came from God. They all further agree that it contains the law of God—that the law of the Lord is perfect. The only wonder is, that man ever attempted to make any other creed or law for the Church. Such an undertaking could not have commenced without two wicked assumptions:

1. That the law of God, as set forth in the Bible, is not sufficient—is a failure.

2. That the insufficiency or failure can be remedied by weak, erring, and uninspired men.

No man of intelligence will affirm, in plain terms, that the Bible is not sufficient for the government of the saints; or that man—uninspired man—can make a creed that will serve a better purpose than the Bible. Still such affirmations are implied in every attempt made by uninspired men to make a creed. If you admit, as all are bound to do, that the law of God is in the Bible; that nothing may be added to it, nothing taken from it, and that no part of it may be changed, there is not an excuse in the world for making another law. The law of God in the Bible is *the law,* the *divine law,* the *supreme law,* in the kingdom of God; and it is a treasonable movement to attempt to get up another constitution, law, name, body, or officers, apart from the constitution, law, name, body, and officers as found in the Bible.

But the matter now in hand is to find a *safe course* to pursue. Can this be done? All admit the Bible is right. All admit that the law of God in the Bible is right. All admit that those who follow the Bible honestly and faithfully, in faith and practice, will be saved. All admit that wherever any creed differs from the Bible it is wrong. Then it is infallibly safe to take the Bible and follow it. When men undertake to prove that a human creed is a good one, they argue that it is *like the Bible.* If a

creed like the Bible is a good one, why will not the Bible itself do? If the Bible will not serve the purpose—is insufficient and a failure—a creed like it would be equally insufficient. When men make a creed to do what the Bible would not do, they should certainly make it different from the Bible, or it would serve no better purpose than the Bible itself.

Why does not some man, who thinks we can not govern the Church with the law of God, come out and show us wherein the law of God is deficient; where the creed should be made different from the law of God, so as to serve the purpose better? No man does this; but every advocate of a human creed maintains that he took his creed from the Bible; that he can prove it by the Bible, or that it is like the Bible. There are not many positions that are conceivable touching this matter. It might be a source of some satisfaction to look at the positions possible:

1. Did the Lord design the Bible, or his law set forth in it, as the creed—the rule of faith and practice? He certainly did; for the first Christians and the Church had no creed or rule of faith and practice but the instructions found in the sacred writings, the law of God, as now found in the Bible. It is simply a matter of fact, that the first Christians and Church had no guide but the teaching of Christ and the apostles. Then, the apostolic requirement to "preach the word"—to commit the things learned of the apostles to faithful men, who shall be able to

teach others also; to preach no other Gospel, nor even pervert the Gospel; to add nothing, take away nothing; to continue in the things learned; to hold fast the form of sound words—sound speech, that can not be condemned, shows that the Lord intended us to go to Him for the creed, the rule of faith and practice; to adhere to His teaching, as set forth by Him, and His apostles, and not to be turned away after the commandments of men and the rudiments of the world.

The grand statement of Paul, that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works," shows the use that the Lord intended should be made of the Scriptures. They were intended to *perfect* the man of God, and *thoroughly* furnish him for every good work. This leaves no room for any human creed, and no excuse for any man to hanker after one. It shows, also, the Lord's design—that He designed the inspired Scriptures to be *the rule* of faith and practice.

2. Seeing, now, the Lord's design, to make the inspired Scriptures the rule of faith and practice, has He failed in that design? and shall some man, or set of men, presume to improve on the Lord's design, and accomplish that wherein the Lord failed? This would be presumption added to presumption.

3. But it is a fact, that no human creed existed

for about three hundred years after the birth of Christ. During the most successful and triumphant period of the existence of the Church, she had no human creed, but was governed wholly by the law of God. This ought to satisfy all good men.

4. But what is gained when you make a creed? Nothing, only that a foundation is laid for a party. No man nor set of men can make a creed that will give general satisfaction to any considerable number even of the best men in the world. Vast numbers of them will never indorse it, and will never unite with those who hold the creed. Even those who indorse it, every few years will get into contentions about it, and split asunder. Take the Presbyterians for an example. They have a creed with as much human skill, wisdom, and labor bestowed on it as any creed in the world. What has resulted from it?

A. It has barred them from all other denominations.

B. It is not believed nor received by any people in the world except themselves.

C. They have had eight or ten divisions over it.

D. The Old and New School are now divided about the interpretation of the creed.

E. After a struggle of some two hundred years, all the sorts of Presbyterians together in the United States amount to not more than five hundred thousand, or about *one in seventy* of our entire population! The effort to return to apostolic ground and

teaching, in all things, in the great reformatory movement of the nineteenth century, has risen up and outnumbered them in fifty years, in defiance of the combined opposition of all the parties in the land. The same has been illustrated by the Methodist and Baptist creeds, only that they have been more prolific in both numbers and divisions.

5. There is not a human creed in the world that has any popularity in a single party on the face of the earth, except the one that has adopted it. All other religious parties utterly disregard it. The idea of any extended success on a human creed is utterly hopeless. There is nothing clearer than that the parties built on these human platforms are decomposing and crumbling away to nothing. The man bowed down under a human creed, at this late date, with the history of the past three hundred years before him, must be a dull scholar truly.

6. The Bible has the advantage in every respect. All admit that it is from God; that it is right in all respects; that it is perfect in all its parts; that it contains all things that pertain to life and godliness; that it contains the whole will of God to man; that it contains the law of God; that it contains the teaching of Christ and the apostles; the word of God, able to save the soul, to build up the saints, and give them an inheritance among the sanctified; thoroughly furnish them for every good work; that it contains the rule by which all shall be judged in the last day. It has the weight of divine authority

in it. It has the power of God in it. It is backed up by the Almighty Father of heaven and earth; by His oath; by the throne, and Him who sits on the throne; by the crown and all the armies of the upper world.

The men who stand by it defend it, and commit their all to it; are girded as with the everlasting hills, and continually realize that the everlasting arms are underneath. They depend not on their own wisdom, but on the wisdom of God, as set forth in the holy teaching of Scripture; the power of God and the wisdom of God, as displayed in the preaching of the cross of Christ. They depend on no teaching of their own, views, nor theories, but of their great Master, the Messiah; His teaching, and that of His apostles; His cause and His work. They have identified themselves with Him and His cause, and have lost sight of themselves in beholding the glories of their Lord and Redeemer. They have taken their stand behind their great Leader, the Lord, the King, who sits on the throne in heaven, and intend to keep Him in front of them. They have planted themselves squarely on the foundation which the Lord laid, on which the Church was at first planted, and on the law of the Lord, and intend to stand up by their Lord, His cause, all He said and did; to defend and maintain that and nothing else. This, they know, is infallibly safe for this world and that which is to come.

They intend to stand by every man, side by side,

in full fellowship, who is identified by their Lord and His cause, and push the Bible, the law of the Lord, the teaching of Christ and His apostles, through the world. The Gospel of Christ is their theme. Those for the Gospel of Christ, His teaching, and that of the apostles, and nothing else, will find themselves all united in one cause and one work, under their one great Leader and Commander. The Lord of hosts will be with them.

On the other hand, those on the side of human creeds, if they have not seen enough to satisfy them, will soon see enough. They have no cohesion. They are splitting on every pretext. They are crumbling and falling to pieces on every hand. They are convincing sensible men that they have nothing tangible nor intelligible. They are groping their way in the dark. They can not stand before Bible men. For they admit that the Bible is right; that it is from God; that it is perfect; that their creed is not right, not from God, not perfect. With these admissions, they can not stand before the Bible and Bible men. They can not maintain their plea for a creed which they admit is not right, not from God, not perfect, in competition with the book which all admit is from God, right, perfect. They can not withstand the men for Christ, His cause, His Gospel, His teaching, and that of His apostles, and nothing else. There is no standing before the Lord and His cause, nor before His word—His Gospel.

The men who intend to oppose the friends of

Jesus, should be informed what they will have to withstand, so as to enable them to make up the issue and prepare themselves for the content. It is now in tangible and intelligible form, so that they can understand it. They need not commence isolating scraps from writings among Christians of the present day, or of any day, as exponents of the teaching of Bible men. Many of these scraps might be shown to be all right, if taken in their contextual connection; but whether this can be done in every instance or not, is a matter of no importance. The slips of the pens of good men, the chance erroneous positions taken by them, or mistakes made, are not the teaching, or a fair representation of their effort. No man is bound to defend these. They are not the ground of Bible men.

The Gospel, the teaching of the Lord and His apostles, the ground on which the first Christians stood, is the ground, the Gospel, and teaching maintained, advocated, and defended. As one man, the friends of the Lord Jesus stand here, and, by the grace of God, intend to stand here to the last. If it is not safe, then all the Christians for the first three hundred years were not safe, for they all stood here. They believed the Gospel, and became obedient to the faith. They, then, followed the apostles' teaching faithfully, and had the promise of a crown of life. This is infallibly safe for this world and the world to come.

May all the friends of the Lord prove themselves

worthy of this ground, defend and maintain it with integrity till the Lord shall come, and thus be able to say, "I have kept the faith." In the Lord, their strength and Redeemer, is their everlasting trust. To His name be the honor and power everlasting.

THE NEW CREATURE

By Z. T. SWEENEY

THE philosophic student of human nature needs no proof of its defilement. He has only to analyze the purposes and aspirations of his heart, to make him cry out, with the leper of old, "Unclean, unclean!" He has but to survey the purposes and aspirations of others, as they manifest themselves in human conduct, to cause him to re-echo the sentiment of the royal bard of Israel, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one."

Man is represented in the Scriptures as being ignorant, guilty, polluted, and dying; and the apostle says that Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. It is therefore proposed by the Gospel to furnish wisdom for man's ignorance, righteousness for his guilt, sanctification for his pollution, and redemption for his death. Man without the benefits of the Gospel, is represented as being in the kingdom of darkness; and, with these benefits, as being in the kingdom of God's dear Son.

It is evident that the transition from one of

these kingdoms into the other necessitates a complete, thorough, and radical change—such a change as represents a new creature, or new creation. While we can not emphasize too strongly the importance and necessity of this change, it is possible for us to form exaggerated and false notions of what constitutes the change.

In the popular religious instruction of the age, it is often taught that man is inherently and totally corrupted, and that he can do nothing pleasing to God, until by an act of almighty grace, above his own comprehension, he is made a new creature. Martin Luther says: "Every good work, though performed as well as possible, is still a venial sin. . . . Yea, every action of the just man is damnable, and a mortal sin." Melanchthon says: "All our actions and exertions are sins." Calvin says: "Never, yet, has a pious person done a pious work which was not damnable in the sight of God."

We by no means assert that the religious world today teaches precisely what was taught by the fathers of Protestantism concerning man's depravity; but we do assert that its theology is still largely colored by such teaching. Hence the popular doctrine of man's helplessness, and of the necessity for such a change as will destroy the old nature and create a new one, without regard to man's volition. When a man whose heart has been melted by the story of the cross surrenders himself to God, under the delusion that he has been made a new creature

in the above sense, all is well till he goes to mingle with the world's sin and temptation; then the hot flush of his first love gives way under the chill blasts, the golden dawning is wrapped in clouds, and he wakes to the painful consciousness that there is a great deal of the old creature left within him. The logic of life forces him to conclude that either he has been mistaken as to what constitutes the new creature, or else that he has never become one. It is very important, therefore, that we should have correct conceptions as to what does really constitute the new creature.

The human faculties have been distributed by philosophers into three classes—the physical, the intellectual, and the moral. Does the becoming a new creature make a change in the constituent qualities of any of these faculties? When a man has become a new creature, there has certainly been no impartation of any new physical faculties, nor any change in the essential qualities of the old ones. It is also evident that the same is true concerning the intellectual faculties. Intellectual peculiarities in the sinner will appear as intellectual peculiarities in the new creature. A weak-minded sinner will surely make a weak-minded saint; while a strong-minded sinner will just as certainly make a strong-minded saint. There remains for consideration the third class of faculties—the moral. Does the becoming a new creature involve an *essential* change in these? We must answer again in the negative. The

new creature possesses no other and no more moral faculties than the man possessed before the change we are considering.

It becomes us to move with some caution here, lest we be misunderstood. We do not assert that there is no change in the moral faculties; but, that there is no impartation of any new faculties and no change in the essential qualities of the old. Even the change which does occur is more the effect of the new creation than a part of the process. It is painfully evident to every man, that his moral bias is changed only by continuous and prayerful struggle. To illustrate the idea, take a man that is covetous both by nature and acquirement. Does simply becoming a new creature extinguish that covetousness, and make him generous? A man of violent temper will find the same temptations to beset his pathway after he has become a new creature as before, while an ungodly ambition is overcome only by continuous supplication and humiliation at the foot of the cross.

We are now ready to answer the question, What is it which becomes new in the becoming a new creature? It is simply man's *activities and relationships*, and not his *essence*. The slave of Satan becomes the servant of righteousness; the alien from the commonwealth of Israel becomes a citizen in the kingdom of God; the prodigal returns to his Father's house. His powers are exerted in a new direction. His mind is turned back into its proper

channel, and the affections are transferred from debasing and degrading things to those that are ennobling and elevating. Thus he is figuratively represented as having a new mind and a new heart. All his *relations* to God, to himself, to his fellows, to time, and to eternity are new; but in *essence* he is the same creature.

1. *This New Life is entered through a New Birth.* It does not come within the scope of this discourse to present an elaborate discussion of the new birth; but we will, in passing, make a simple statement of what we hold it to be. We suppose that all intelligent readers will agree that the expression, the new birth, is figurative. But of what is it a figure? Evidently of the transition from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. The man who has experienced this transition has been born again; while the man who has not experienced it, certainly has not been so born. When the Savior says, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God"; he certainly declares the identity or the equivalence of these changes. Furthermore, it is clearly indicated that the entire man participates in the change.

But man is a duality. He is body and spirit. There is an inner man, and an outer man. There must therefore be an inner and an outer transition. The inner transition is accomplished by a birth of the Spirit, the outer by a birth of the water. The

transition of the inner man from a condition of careless indifference and unbelief into one of hearty and affectionate trust, is the birth of the Spirit; and the transition of the body in the act of baptism, is the birth of the water. What the Savior expresses figuratively to Nicodemus, he afterwards expresses literally in the commission, when he says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Paul expresses the same idea by "the washing of regeneration (the renovation) and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." The inner man is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him; and the outer man is washed in the baptism of the renovation, or Gospel dispensation.

2. *The New Birth admits us to the blessings of a New Covenant.* "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah" (Jer. xxxi:31). Paul tells us that Christianity is the new covenant (Heb. viii).

A. *It has a new priesthood.* No longer the fallible, sinful, and mortal priesthood of the Aaronic order; but there is an high priest after the power of an endless life; one that is pure, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, and one that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

B. *It has new subjects.* Not as with the old covenant, is either descent or purchase the essential condition of entrance; but faith. No one in this

covenant has to be taught, saying, know the Lord: for all know him, from the greatest to the least.

C. *Its terms of membership are new.* It was fleshly birth and circumcision that gave a being the franchises of the old covenant; but it is a birth of water and of the Spirit, and a life of holiness, that entitle to the blessings of the new.

D. *The blessings are likewise new.* These are no longer distinctively blessings that are seen and temporal; but those that are unseen, spiritual, and eternal.

3. *The New Fellowship.* While man is in the kingdom of darkness, his fellowship is with the king, the citizens, and the unfruitful works, of darkness. He is a partner in all the evil of this kingdom; for fellowship means partnership.

In passing out of this kingdom, man throws off his evil partnership, and accepts the fellowship of the Gospel. This fellowship is twofold in its character:

A. Fellowship with the divine nature. "Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (I. John i:3). The fellowship (communion) of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (II Cor. xiii:14). We thus become partners of the divine nature, and enter into all its wealth, by entering into a knowledge of the divine will, by conformity to the divine image, and by participation in the divine felicity. It is evidently our duty, therefore, to bring all our powers and talents into

this glorious partnership. Alas! that so many, like Ananias and Sapphira, keep back part of the price!

B. The fellowship of the saints is the second part of this fellowship. This is participation in the common Christian duties and responsibilities. As fellow-disciples, we sit at the feet of the same master; as fellow-laborers, we have before us the same duties; as fellow-citizens, we have upon us the same responsibilities; as fellow-soldiers, we fight in the same ranks; as fellow-prisoners, we endure for the Gospel's sake; as fellow-servants, we endeavor to do the will of the Master; and as fellow-heirs, we partake of the inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading.

4. *The New Motive.* Every man in the world, whether good or evil, is governed by some motive which is imperial, and before which all others must give way.

In some, it may be the love of fame; in others, the love of money; in others, the love of self or of pleasure. The life of the man soon discloses the master motive within him. In the new creature the imperial motive is love. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another" (John xiii:34). While this was not new as a theory when Christ spoke these words, it then became new as a *practice.* Never before was a kingdom founded upon this principle, nor a band of men collected whose lives were to be formed in harmony with this

key-note. Moreover, it was new in the extent to which Christ carried it—*as I have loved you.* Never before had men been taught so to love as to lay down their lives for each other.

5. *The New Way.* Guided by this holy motive, the new creature walks in a new way.

"And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. . . . And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Is. xxxv:8-10). I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me" (John xiv:6). "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way" (Heb. x:19-20). It is called the narrow way that leads to life, in contrast with the broad road that leads to death; also, the way of God in truth, the way of salvation, the way of righteousness, the way of understanding, the way of wisdom. The unanimity with which this *way* is represented in the singular number should command the thoughtful attention of those who are constantly talking of different roads to heaven.

6. *The New Home.* Walking in this new way we are led to a new home.

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John xiv:2). "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me" (John xvii:24). "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Peter iii:13). "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God" (Rev. iii:12).

This beautiful vision is ever before the eyes of the child of God. As the soldier beside his lonely camp-fire, thinking of home, falls asleep and dreams of its dear ones; so the soldier of Christ, in the thick of the fight, or in the lonely hours of watching, is encouraged by this beautiful vision of home. As the poor pilgrim and sojourner in a strange land, lying upon hospital couch or neglected pallet, racked by fever and tortured by thirst, longs for home and mother; so the child of God, heart-broken, and weary with life's sorrows and burdens, turns for consolation to that home vision, where God, with more than a mother's tenderness, shall wipe away all tears from his eyes, and where there shall be neither sorrow nor crying any more.

"We are on our journey home,
Where Christ our Lord has gone;
We shall meet around His throne,
When He makes His people one,
In the New Jerusalem."

Oh, the joy of that blissful hour, when the toil-worn son of God shall have reached the end of his pilgrimage, and the beautiful gates shall open before him!

When the Roman conquerors ended a successful campaign, they were entitled to a triumphal entry into the city. The gates were thrown wide open; and while beautiful maidens strewed sweet flowers, and sang songs of welcome, the conquerors entered the city, greeted by the shouts of the multitude, and the blasts of music from the royal bands. But short-lived was their welcome. The voices that fell upon their ear were soon hushed in death, and the hands that strewed were soon dust with the flowers they scattered. The conqueror that overcometh through Jesus Christ, shall have a welcome that shall endure forever. The gates of glory shall open before his advancing step, and the greetings of angels will fall upon his ear, while the harpers shall play "The Conquering Hero." Under the emerald branches of the tree of life that over-arch the waters of the river of life, he shall march, to heaven's melodies, up to the throne of God, and have placed upon his brow the victor's fadeless crown.

7. *The New Name.* We shall also receive a new name.

"I will write upon him my new name" (Rev. iii:12). "To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written" (Rev. ii:17). "And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. xxii:4). Men have been trying to find out that new name ever since the promise has been given, and have written many speculations about it. While it will not be fully revealed till the proper time, the mind can not help forming an opinion about it. There are in the Scriptures more than a hundred different appellations, each of which expresses some tender relation of Christ to his people. He is our Bread of Life, our Rock of Defense, our Captain, our Elder Brother, etc.; and I have sometimes thought that when the Lord inscribes his new name upon us, it will be a name that will concentrate in itself all that is expressed in these various names that we now have.

8. *The New Song.* Having inscribed upon our foreheads the new name, we shall join the chorus of the redeemed in singing the new song. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. v:9). "And I looked, and lo,

a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sang as it were a new song before the throne" (Rev. xiv:1-3). "And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest" (Rev. xv: 3,4).

There are many of the judgments of God that are not manifest to us now. While I trust implicitly in the justice and goodness of all the doings of God with the children of men, He has done many things in which I am at present unable to see the justice and mercy. I look, however, for a time when God shall reveal His righteous judgments unto the sons of men. Then there will be light thrown back upon the past, and such light as shall completely vindicate His character as a ruler. Then shall be fulfilled, "All nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest." Not only shall the ransomed join in full chorus in this song; but, in minor key, the lost and undone shall confess the

justness of its praise, though it be the death-song of their own souls.

Thus, briefly and imperfectly, have I sketched the New Creature. Beginning in the new birth, and continuing to walk in newness of life, the new creature rejoices at last, and forever, in the home of splendor and felicity which God has prepared for them that love Him. May the God of all grace kindly grant, that, according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus, such may be the life and destiny of us all.

CONVERSION, OR TURNING TO GOD

By BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Text.—"Repent, therefore, and turn, that your sins may be blotted out, in order that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."—Acts iii:19.

THE introduction of the religion of Christ into the world, is the grandest event connected with the entire history of man. The founding of empires, kingdoms and republics, their revolutions and downfalls, hold no comparison in point of magnitude, with the one grand and transcendently sublime event of founding this new institution of religion, called the kingdom of Christ. The infidel that denies Christ and the divine authority of the Bible, still has this wonderful event, the most astounding one ever recorded—the founding of Christianity—to reason on and account for.

There stands the undeniable fact, confirmed by the testimony of Jews, infidels, pagans and Christians; the united testimony of all history; uncontradicted by any authority, at the time, in the place, and by the persons, as reported in the Bible. Admitting all this, as a man of reason, and one who claims to

account for the position he takes, it devolves on him to tell us how it was that a poor carpenter, a Nazarene, who had never received even common schooling, the society of influential persons, any power from wealth or birth, at the head of a dozen fishermen of Galilee, fresh from their humble avocation, uncouth, unaccomplished and unlettered, stood up in Jerusalem, the center of the most violent religious bigotry, in opposition to the sanhedrin, the distinguished rabbis, scribes, and doctors of Jewish divinity, with their magnificent temple, imposing synagogues, altars, victims, and ancient ritual on the one hand; and outside of all this paganism, with the civil governments, the money and philosophy of the world at command, on the other; and in defiance of this combined opposition of the Jewish and pagan world swept away their religious rites, forms, ceremonies and institutions, declaring them null and void, and established a new religion on the ruins?

How was this done if God was not in the work? How did twelve unaccomplished, unlettered and moneyless fishermen, in defiance of the doctors, priests and scribes in a few days after their leader had been put to an ignominious death, and they had shown themselves to be cowards, stand up boldly in Jerusalem and induce three thousand of the people to believe that God had raised this same leader from the dead and turn away from their former religion, associations, and everything earthly that was dear to them, and commit themselves to this new faith?

How did they persuade five thousand on another occasion, to fall in with them? How did they, in a short time, extend the doctrine to Samaria, and in ten years to the Gentiles, bringing thousands to the faith? By what means, natural or supernatural, human or divine, did they, in forty years, extend it the length of the great Mediterranean Sea, to all the cities, towns and villages of note throughout Asia Minor, in the *mere strength of ignorant fishermen?* This they did, if the skeptic is right. How credulous the man must be who believes all this!

Paine, in his book, falsely styled "The Age of Reason," delighted to array Moses, Jesus, and Mahomet, in the same class, as three great imposters, and skeptics still delight to speak of the similarity between the rise of Mohammedanism and Christianity; but certainly there was no similarity between the early progress of Christianity and Mohammedanism. Christianity proselyted three thousand persons the first day the death, resurrection and glorification of its founder in the heavens was fully unfolded, but Mohammedanism did not make one hundred converts in the first ten years. No imposter ever converted three thousand persons at the first speech, nor five thousand at the second; nor could the religion of Christ have done this, if nothing more than human power had been in it. Its success was not attained either by pandering to the pride of life, the lusts of the eye, the customs of the world, nor by enticing words of man's wisdom, or

any effort to please man. The holy life, the pure morals, the austere manners it enjoined, forbid this. Nor was it done by sympathizing with other and false systems of religion in the world, nor the true one which the Lord had abolished; nor by aping the priesthood who taught these systems and bound them on the necks of the people. They remembered the command of their leader, "Be you not *like them.*"

On the one hand, they openly declared the Jews' religion null, void, abolished, taken out of the way, and that by the deeds of its law no flesh could be justified. On the other hand, they declared all paganism an abomination in the sight of God; that pagan idols were not gods, but the workmanship of men's hands; that there was no salvation in them. They openly declared the whole world to be under sin, under the power of the wicked one—guilty before God; and that there was no other name given under heaven nor among men by which any person could be saved, but the name of Jesus. This was offensive to all, both Jew and Gentile alike, sweeping away every thing they held sacred under the name of religion. It was revolutionizing religiously, in all its bearings. He who can believe that twelve fishermen, without learning or any superior natural ability, money, or popularity, in *their own mere human strength,* stood up in the face of the priests and scribes of Israel, on one hand, and the statesmen, philosophers, and men of wealth, combined

with the entire pagan priesthood, on the other, as described; and advocated this new doctrine, defended, propagated and perpetuated it, as the facts in the case, admitted by Jews, pagans and skeptics show they did, never ought to speak of the credulity of mankind. The man who can believe all this is too credulous to be a Christian. He can believe without evidence. The Christian system only requires a man to believe with credible evidence.

Shortly after the great Pentecost, Peter and John went up to the temple at three o'clock in the afternoon, as we count time, it being the hour the Jews were accustomed to assemble for prayers. There were two causes moving them, if no more, in going there at this time:

1. The natural desire of the human soul, when in possession of good news, to tell it—to publish it abroad. They had the best news ever published—the news of a free and gracious pardon for a guilty and condemned race.

2. They had a divine commission from the great head of the Church, to "Go into all the world and preach these good news to every creature"—to "Go, and disciple all nations."

Impelled, then, by the natural desire, burning in their breasts, to publish the good news of salvation to a perishing world, and a divine commission requiring them to do it, they went up to the temple. As they were passing the gate called Beautiful, their ears were greeted by the importunities of a beggar,

a man lame from his birth, who was carried and laid there to implore the charities of the people as they passed into the temple. Looking on Peter and John, he asked them for money. These preachers were in a similar predicament with many others of whom we have heard; they were poor men and had no money, nor were they ashamed to acknowledge the fact. Peter with John looking intently on the man, as he lay before them, helpless, said, "Look on us." He anxiously gave heed to them, expecting to receive something. Peter said, "Silver and gold I have none; but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and raised him up. And immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength; and leaping up, he stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God." This attracted the attention of the people, and thus served one of the principal designs of miracles. Miracles never converted anybody, nor was their design to convert. The design of this miracle was twofold:

1. To attract the attention of the people to get them to hear.

2. To prove to them that God was with these men, or, in other words, to confirm their divine mission.

Another matter worthy of note, in this grand transaction, is, that it occurred in broad daylight and openly, as if the Lord would challenge the world

to investigate—to test the claims of the newly authorized embassadors of Christ. Nor was this done in vain, for in the council held over the matter, by Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, alluding to the healing of the lame man, they admitted, not only that a miracle had been done, but a noted miracle; and not only a noted miracle, but that it was known to all who dwelt in Jerusalem, and that they could not deny it.

Peter, seeing the eyes of the people earnestly fixed on himself and John, proceeded to guard against another evil against which no imposter ever does. "Why," says he, "look so intent on us, as if by our own power or holiness this man has been made whole?" This is in a very different spirit from that of Pope Pius IX, who claims to be a successor of the apostle Peter. When they look intently on this modern Peter—the false Peter—the Man of Sin—or when they bow down before him, he never inquires, "Why look you so earnestly on us, as if by our own power or holiness this man had been made whole?" He claims that it is by *his own* power and *holiness* that wondrous things are done, and requires them to address him by "His Holiness," "Vicar of Christ," "Visible Head of the Church on Earth," "Lord God the Pope," etc. But the Peter whom Jesus sent, unlike this venerable head and representative of the great apostasy, when Cornelius, in his unenlightened condition, desired

to worship him, forbade it, saying, "I myself also am a man." He would not permit any person to fall before him, as to the Lord. In the same style in Solomon's porch, he inquired, "Why look you so earnestly on us, as if by our own power or holiness this man has been made whole?"

This was abundant caution that he might not fall into the sin of Moses, on account of which he was not permitted to lead the Israelites into the promised land. Some have supposed this sin was, that Moses became angry. Others think it consisted in his striking the rock. There is no evidence, however, that it consisted in either of these, but clear evidence that it consisted in an entirely different thing. He took glory to himself and Aaron, that was due to God alone. Said he to the Israelites, "You rebels; must *we* bring you water from this rock?" The Lord says to him, "Because you sanctified *me* not in the eye of this people, you shall not go before them into the land I have promised them." He did not set God apart before that people, or in their eyes, as the source of the water from the rock, but said, "Must *we* give you water from this rock?"

Peter avoids a similar sin, in inquiring, "Why look you so intently on us, as if by our own power or holiness this man has been made whole? The name of Jesus Christ, through faith in His name, has given this man this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." How bold, manly, and self-

denying this language, losing sight of himself, and carrying the minds of his hearers to his Lord and King. *The name* of Jesus Christ, through faith in *His name,* has made this man whole. This is done, too, in the presence of you all. As Paul said, before Agrippa, "This thing was not done in a corner," but openly and in broad daylight, before the gaze of a numerous multitude. This convinced them of the truth, and he proceeded as follows: "Repent, therefore, and turn, that your sins may be blotted out."

This opens the way for the main topic of this discourse, which is *conversion.* Many fears of unsoundness are entertained on this subject. On this account, it will be necessary to examine the subject with much care. The first thing, then, will be to consider the word *convert,* and examine its use, and ascertain its meaning in Scripture.

The original Greek word, *strepho,* occurs eighteen times in the *New Testament,* and is translated *turn,* in every instance, in the common version, except Matt. xviii:3: "Except ye be converted and become as a little child," etc. The Bible Union translate it *turn,* here, and read it as follows: "If ye do not turn and become as little children," etc., thus making the turning *their own act,* and at the same time making them accountable beings. If man *can turn* from sin to the Lord, he is an accountable being and may justly be condemned for not turning. But if a man can not turn from sin to the Lord, he

is not accountable, and can not be justly condemned for not turning. We do not condemn the wheel, which *can not turn itself,* for not turning, when there is no power on it sufficient to turn it.

In every instance where the word *strepho* occurs in the *New Testament,* except the last one, Rev. xi:6, the person, or that which was turned, *turned itself,* as for example, Acts vii:42, "God *turned";* Acts xiii:4, Paul says, "We turn to the Gentiles"; Luke vii:9, Jesus "turned him about"; Luke vii:44, "He turned to the woman."

The original Greek word, *epistrepho,* occurs thirty times, and is translated, in the common version, turn, or its equivalent, twenty-two times. It is eight times rendered *converted, or convert.* In a large majority of these cases, that which was turned, *turned itself,* as Matt. ix:22, "Jesus turned him about"; Matt. x:13, "Let your peace return to you"; Mark v.30, "Turned him about in the press," etc. There is nothing in the meaning of this word, showing which way the *turning,* or conversion is, whether from bad or good. This must be learned from the connection, as for example, 2 Pet. ii:22, "The dog turned to his vomit again;" Mark xiii:16, "Let him not turn back," etc. In one instance, where the turning is to the Lord, the turning is ascribed to the preacher; as, for example, Acts xxvi:18, Paul was to "turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God." The turning is here ascribed to the preacher, in view of

his agency, or instrumentality, in turning them. The turning is never ascribed to God, or Christ, or to the Holy Spirit. Still, it is true, when we are looking to God as the author of the entire scheme, by which we are turned and saved, we say that *God turns us.* When we are looking at the instrumentality of the preacher, we ascribe the turning to him. When we are looking at the act of turning, we ascribe the turning to man.

Converted to God, means *turned to God,* and nothing else. It is the purpose of this discourse to elucidate this whole matter fully. In order to do this, it is necessary to make a few preliminary statements:

No person turns to God properly, or in the sense of the Gospel, without undergoing three distinct changes:

1. A distinct divine change in the heart.

2. A distinct divine change in the life, or character.

3. A distinct divine change in the state or relation. When a man is divinely changed in heart, life and relation, he is a new creature, a child of God.

In order, to these three distinct divine changes, there are three distinct appointments in the Gospel.

1. The Lord has appointed faith to change the heart.

2. He has appointed repentance to change the life.

3. He has appointed immersion to change the relation.

The heart is never changed by repentance. The character is never changed by immersion. The state is never changed by faith. Faith and repentance together, never changed the state or relation. Immersion never changed the heart, or life.

These three grand items, in turning to God, can not be reversed in their order. The state or relation can not be changed first, then the life, and then the heart. The life can not be changed first and then the heart. The heart is the beginning place. The change in the heart must be produced first. There can be no repentance, or change in the life, produced by repentance, till the heart is changed. The change in the heart leads to repentance, and produces it. Repentance results in a change of life, or it is worthless. The order of heaven is, that faith must come first, producing a change in the heart. Repentance must follow next, producing, as its legitimate fruit, a change of life. When the heart and life are both changed, the person is ready for a new state or relation.

The way is now clear for the investigation of this work, as a whole, and each of these items separately, in particular:

1. What, then, is meant by *a distinct divine change in the heart?* Such a change as destroys the love of sin and establishes the love of God in the heart of the sinner. The love of sin must be completely destroyed in the heart, so that the subject hates it and no longer desires to practice it; and the

love of God, of righteousness, and holiness, established in the heart, so as to create hunger and thirst after righteousness.

In nine-tenths of the cases where preachers talk of "experimental religion," and require persons to tell experiences, the amount of the experience is no more than that the subject experienced a change—that what the subject once loved he now hates, and what he once hated he now loves. This is all right as far as it goes, but in many churches, it is taken for more than there is in it. It is taken not only for what it is—a change in the heart—but for the entire process of turning to God; a work of grace, evidence of pardon, the impartation of the Holy Spirit—a new creature. This is too much. All this is not in it. Where the statement is true, there is this much in it, a change in the heart—no more. The love of sin is destroyed in the heart and the love of God established there. That is all. There is no repentance, no change of relation, no pardon, no impartation of the Holy Spirit. The person is simply prepared in heart for all the balance of the work which should follow. Those who thus limit conversion do not comprehend the work. They stop with a single item.

2. What produces this distinct divine change in the heart? It has already been stated that faith produces it. This must now be elaborated and elucidated. Perhaps a description of a case and the manner in which the change in the heart was effected will, at least, illustrate the subject.

Let us suppose a man in your community forty-five years old. In his business operations, he has prospered greatly. Success attends all his plans and financial operations. He is a true gentleman in the worldly sense. He attends fairs, takes the premiums; has fine stock, bets on them when he can find a gentleman who will bet five hundred or a thousand dollars. When he drinks, he only drinks enough imported wines and brandies to make him feel a little richer and sharper in trading than he would otherwise be. He never swears, only when angry and "can't help it." He attends the races; goes to the theatre; never gambles, except where the first class, in some place of refinement and elegance, engage in games for large sums. He assists to build churches, especially if he thinks it will enhance the value of his property two or three times as much as he gives; he gives a little to the poor, but does not see any use in being poor. He never goes to meeting, except on some extraordinary occasion; and has no use for preachers, Bibles, and churches. They are of service only to moralize and keep down ignorant and vicious people. Thus a rich and successful operator goes through the world to the eternal judgment, making money, seeking pleasure, thoughtless about his soul and his relation to God.

In the midst of this mad career, the Lord puts His hand on a little son of seven years, and after some fifteen days of terrible suffering the precious and innocent child breathes the last breath, struggles the

last time, and closes its eyes in death. He stood over and ministered to the little sufferer till the last struggle was over, and saw it sink away in death. Many times already he had planned for the education of that child in some fine university and thought of the property he would give him, but alas! he is gone. His breast wells, he heaves a deep sigh, and groans inexpressibly. Secretly, he inquires, "What is the meaning of all this?" Down he sinks with his heart broken. The world appears now to be one vast gloom. A new theme has come up for his consideration, and one that can not be put off.

Arrangements for the funeral, the coffin, cemetery, and grave are the matters that now rush before him. In awful solemnity and inexpressible grief they are considered. But now what is to be done? A preacher must be had and a funeral sermon must be preached, but what preacher shall be had? He knows nothing of preachers or churches; but he had a grandfather or a grandmother that belonged to some popular Church, and if he leans at all, it is toward that Church and preacher. He remembers how said preacher entered the "sacred desk" with a black robe on, in a very solemn manner, with other evidences of wisdom, piety, and orthodoxy. It is decided that he is the man to preach the funeral sermon. He is sent for, comes, and preaches the sermon.

The heart of the afflicted man has become tender, and it is susceptible of good impressions. He is

willing to hear something about the soul and the other world. He is satisfied that his little child has gone to rest. In the sermon the preacher repeats the words: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" What an awful question! He meditates on it, and, in inexpressible grief, looks back at his effort to gain the world, or as large a share of it as possible. He looks at the other part of it, *losing his own soul!* Is it possible that a man may lose his own soul?

The funeral is over. He and his wife return to their fine mansion. But pride is stricken down. Their hearts are broken. All is gloom. The sweet voice of a dear little son is heard no more. His quick step is no more heard. His little toys are found and laid carefully away as mementoes. He inquires, "Wife, where is that scripture quoted by the preacher?" He can not repeat it, but gives her some idea of it. She knows not where it is, but after a long search, they find and read it many times over: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" They sit and weep over it. "Shall we," said he, "in our stretch to gain this world, *lose our own souls?*" This theme engages their attention much of the time till the next Lord's day.

By this time they are both anxious to attend meeting. In the discourse, the preacher repeats the words: "The wages of sin is death, but the gift or God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In his mind he repeats the words, "the wages of sin is death." "It is possible," says he, "that this is the wages for which I have been working all my life?" He ponders this in his mind during the week, and commences reading his Bible and talking of what he reads, in his family. He longs for the next Lord's day, that he may hear preaching again. You can see now that he is changing rapidly. He attends meeting again, and the preacher quotes the words: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." This strikes down deep into his heart. "And," he exclaims, "is this the end to which I am coming?" Thus he continues on, week after week, struggling under the power of faith. He now is reading and talking about religion much of his time, and inviting religious people home with him. He begins to approach the preacher, and invites him to visit him, and to find his chief delight in religious conversation.

About this time, one of his former associates informs him of some great races soon to come off, and invites him to accompany them. He replies kindly, but very decidedly, "I shall not be there." Another invites him to attend a great ball, soon to come off. He replies, with decision, "I shall not be there." All such follies and vanities have lost their attraction to him. The change that he has undergone is so great that the amusements and pleasures, as he once called them, not only have no attraction

for him, but would make him unhappy if he were where they are. He has no taste or relish for them. The love for them is utterly destroyed in his heart. The matters of the kingdom of God are opening up to him. His soul is now seeking rest, peace and joy in the things of God. His moral sensibilities are all alive and shocked at the thought of vanities and follies such as here alluded to. Truly can he now say, "The things I once loved I now hate, and the things I once hated I now love." This is what is meant in this discourse by "a change of heart"—such a change as *destroys the love of sin* in the heart and *plants the love of God in its place.* This would be received as a divine change of heart in any church in the land. The affections are changed from the love of the world to the love of God. As the popular style of expressing it is, "his feelings are changed."

One grand mistake, very current at the present time, is to regard this change in the heart and, as they say, "in the feelings," as *an evidence of pardon!* It is no evidence of pardon, nor of acceptance with God. Pardon is not a change *in us,* but an act of the pardoning power in heaven *for us.* We do not feel pardon *in us,* as it is not *in us,* but done in heaven for us.

In time of the war, a man was condemned to be shot, and the day set for the execution. His friends sent a petition to the President to pardon him. No reply came, and the general expectation was that he would be executed. His wife took cars and went in

person, to make her plea for pardon. She obtained admittance to the President's apartment, and as she entered his room, she shrieked out, "Oh, my husband!" The President took her by the arm, raised her up, and inquired, "Madam, what of your husband?" She exclaimed, "My husband is condemned to be shot, and I have come to seek and obtain pardon for him." The President wiped away his tears and invited her to be seated, adding, "Your husband shall be pardoned." She instantly sprang to her feet, thanked him from the depths of her heart, and praised God. But her husband did not rejoice yet because this work was not going on *in him,* but in *Washington for him.* The pardon was written out and handed to his wife. She hastened to the telegraph office and dispatched to a friend near the prison of her husband, in the words, "I have obtained a pardon for my husband." Still the husband *felt no pardon,* and did not rejoice. The dispatch was soon read to him, and he then wept tears of inexpressible joy, though yet bound in prison, and praised God for the pardon that had been obtained.

The change in the heart of the sinner, as described in this discourse, is not pardon, nor an evidence of pardon, but a change in his heart, preparing him in heart for pardon. This change, then, is here taken for just what it is, no more, no less. The heart is turned to the Lord. He is now right in heart. This is the first distinct divine change.

3. The next distinct divine change, is *a divine*

change in the life. All the change a man can have in his heart amounts to nothing, unless there is a corresponding change in his life. The Lord's appointment to produce this, *is repentance.* Repentance is a change in the mind or purpose. When this repentance is what it ought to be, and what *must be* to be acceptable to the Lord, it is a change of mind or purpose sufficient to result in a change of life, or in a reformation of life. Repentance does not change the past life. This is beyond the reach of the sinner. Nothing short of the hand of God can change the past life. Pardon separates the sinner from the past life, all its guilt, and the consequences that would follow in the world to come without pardon. The penitent regrets the past life, sorrows for the sins with which it is filled up, and grieves over them, but this in no way changes his relation to the past life.

Nothing but an act of mercy from the Sovereign, is graciously granting pardon, can change the sinner's relation to his past sins. This is not repentance. Repentance looks to the future life. When it is genuine, such as it must be in order to be acceptable to God, it is a change of mind or purpose so great as to result in a change in life for the time to come. It looks forward and promises to cover the whole future life while pardon looks back and covers the whole of the past life, saving him from the past as repentance does from the future. This repentance prepares the sinner in life or in character for pardon, but is not pardon itself. When the sinner is

changed in heart, so that the love of sin is destroyed in his soul and the love of God established in him, and so changed in his mind as to destroy the practice of sin, as to induce him to cease to do evil and learn to do well—to desire from his heart to do the will of God—to hunger and thirst after righteousness—he is a proper subject for pardon.

4. Though the sinner is now changed in his heart and life, the love and practice of sin both destroyed in him, there is yet no change in his relation. He is still in the same state. *He* is greatly changed, but the *relation* is not changed. The change, so far, is only *in him,* not *in the relation,* at all. Being now changed in heart and life, and thus fitted for the new relation, he is now a proper subject for a new state or relation. What is it, then, that transfers the person into the new state or relation; the person whose heart has been changed by faith and whose life has been changed by repentance? Immersion into the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is the divine appointment to change the state or relation. Immersion does not change the heart nor the life, but the state or relation of the person whose heart and life have been changed by faith and repentance. This accounts for one trouble that many people find. They find many good people who have never been immersed, and many bad people who have been immersed. This is a plain matter. Immersion does not make them good. It changes neither their hearts nor

lives. If persons are immersed who have not the faith to change them in heart, or the repentance to change them in life, as, no doubt, is the case with many, they will be no better than they were before. But that does not prove that the person who is changed in heart by faith, and changed in life by repentance, is in the new state till immersed into Christ, or that he need not be immersed into Christ. He is the very person that ought to be immersed into Christ.

Some one may inquire, What do you mean by a change of state or relation? The *very act itself* of entering into the kingdom or Church, is what is meant. It is not the change in the heart that prepares a man in heart to enter, nor the change in life, that prepares a man in life to enter, that is here meant by a change in relation, but the *act*, on the part of one already changed in heart and life, of *entering into the kingdom.* Faith changes no relation, but changes or prepares a man in heart for a change of relation. Repentance changes no relation, but prepares a man in life for a change in relation. Immersion changes no man's heart or life, but changes the state or relation of the believing penitent, transferring him into the new state or relation.

But it is very desirable to have a distinct idea of what is meant by this new state. A change of state, is simply to change from one state to another. The change alluded to, in the state or relation is expressed in several clear passages of Scripture, as the

following: "Immersed into one body"—"immersed into Christ"—"enter into the kingdom"—"immersing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Each of these expressions has the idea of transition from one state to another. The transition is into the state of justification. Every man immersed into one body is in a justified state. "Immersed into Christ" amounts to the same thing. To "enter into the kingdom of God," amounts to the same, for all who enter into the kingdom of God are justified, and none who do not enter into the kingdom of God is justified.

All believing penitents, immersed into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, are in the kingdom, in one body, in Christ, in a state of justification. When the Lord says, "He who believes and is immersed shall be saved," it is equivalent to he who believes and is immersed shall be pardoned or justified. When He says, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God," the amount of it is the same as if He had said, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he can not enter into the body of Christ or be pardoned. A man can be changed in heart, be good in heart, and not be in the kingdom of God. He can be good in life and not be in the kingdom of God; but no matter how good he is in heart and life, he is not in the kingdom or body of Christ unless immersed into the body. Immersion into the name of the Father, and of the

Son, and of the Holy Spirit, on the part of a believing penitent, is the visible act, in which he is transferred from one kingdom to another. Before this act, though he may be prepared in heart and life to enter, he is out of the body or kingdom; after this act, he is in the body or kingdom.

No two persons can properly enter the marriage relation without three similar changes:

a. A change in heart.

b. A change in the life.

c. A change in the relation or state.

In the acquaintance the parties form, the faith or confidence in each other becomes such as to change their hearts or affections. Here there is a change in their feelings, and the desire to enter the marriage relation is established. This is followed by a visible change in their lives. A series of preparations for an anticipated new relation commences. They are still single, notwithstanding the change in heart and life. The time is appointed and the marriage ceremony is performed. Before that ceremony they were each in a single state. Now they are married, the state is changed. When did they enter the marriage covenant? When did they enter the new state? When their hearts and feelings were changed? Certainly not. When their lives were changed and a change was seen in their actions? By no means. But when the marriage ceremony was pronounced. This is the time when they entered the new relation. The whole relationship throughout the entire train

of connections, on both sides, was changed the moment that ceremony was pronounced. It did not change their hearts or lives, make them any better, or love any more ardently, but it changed the relation. The marriage is not dated from the time of the first change they experienced in their hearts, nor from the time of the first change in their lives, but from the time when the marriage ceremony was performed.

If the gentleman is worth a million of money, and falls dead one minute before the ceremony would have been performed, the lady is not legally entitled to one dollar interest in his estate. If he falls dead one minute after the ceremony is pronounced she has an interest in it. There is something in an "external performance," an "outward act." The changes in the heart and life were necessary, and they were not prepared to enter the new relation without these changes, but the act of entering was a separate thing. So the changes in the heart and life of the sinner are necessary, and he would not be prepared to enter into the kingdom of God without these changes, or to enjoy the kingdom when in it, but they only prepare him to enter, and do not transfer him into the kingdom.

And in like manner, immersion into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, of a penitent believer, has no tendency to change the heart, and is not designed for that purpose, but is solely to change the relation. In it the proper

subject is transferred "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," "into Christ," "into one body," "into the kingdom," into a state of justification or pardon.

The person, then, being turned to the Lord in heart by faith, in life by repentance, and in his relation by immersion, is, in heart, and life, and relation a new creature.

It is of great advantage, in looking at all subjects, to keep the items all distinct. Men sometimes say, the Lord gives faith. This is true in a certain sense, but not the sense generally intended. In creating man, He gave him intelligence, or the ability to believe facts on credible testimony. He gave us the Gospel; sent men to preach it to us, that we might hear and believe it. When men ask whether they can believe *in* and *of themselves,* if they mean without the facts given to believe, or the Gospel that brings them to us, they should be answered that *they can not.* But if they mean to inquire, whether a man can believe the Gospel when preached to him, without some supernatural power *performed directly on him,* to enable him to believe, or *on the Gospel,* to make it believable, they should be answered, *he can.* If he can not, he can not be justly condemned for not believing. The part, then, the Lord performs in making a believer, is in giving a man the Gospel, which *he can believe.* He will, therefore, condemn him for not believing.

The part that believing performs, in preparing a

man for the enjoyment of God, is in changing his heart, thus destroying the love of sin and establishing the love of God in him.

The part that repentance performs, is in changing his life; destroying the practice of sin for the future.

The part that immersion performs, is in changing the state or relation of the man previously prepared in heart by faith, and in life by repentance, for the kingdom of God. He is immersed into the name, the body or kingdom.

Pardon is not done in the sinner, in the water, nor on earth, but *in heaven,* for the sinner, separating him forever from all past sins, and receiving him as innocent, as if he had never sinned.

The impartation of the Holy Spirit, is the consummation in turning to God. Because you are sons, He has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, saying, Father, Father.

Now, is Peter the same in Solomon's porch as Peter on Pentecost? Where did he begin on Pentecost? He began by preaching the Gospel. He did the same in Solomon's porch. On Pentecost, when they heard the Gospel preached, they were cut to the heart. They would not have been cut to the heart if they had not believed. When he made his appeal in Solomon's porch, upon the healing of the cripple, they heard and believed. On Pentecost, he commanded them to repent. He did the same in Solomon's porch. On Pentecost he commanded them to

be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Instead of this, he commanded them, in Solomon's porch, to "be converted," as it reads in the common version, or "turn," as it reads in both the New Translation, by Anderson, and the Revised Version by the Bible Union, "that your sins may be blotted out."

There will be no difficulty in seeing that "the remission of sins," and "sins blotted out," amount to the same. But some will be troubled to see how "be immersed" and "be converted," or "turn," amount to the same. Yet this is the case. "Be immersed," is a literal command. There is nothing figurative about it. But the command, in Solomon's porch, to "turn," puts the result accomplished in immersion for immersion itself. These persons were already turned in heart by faith, and they are, in the connection, commanded to repent, which turns or changes the life. There was nothing remaining to turn or change but the relation. This was the turning commanded, and as this is effected in immersion, the command here amounted to the same as the command to be immersed on Pentecost. That on Pentecost was "in order to the remission of sins"; and that in Solomon's porch, "that your sins may be blotted out." On Pentecost he says "and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"; and in Solomon's porch, he has "the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord"; the same, expressed in different words.

A man says "That is all clear enough, but I am afraid I have not the right kind of change of heart." The following case will illustrate a proper change of heart, and the Lord's mercy and love in receiving the penitent sinner when he turns to Him:

A young man ran off from his father and mother, and was absent a year before they knew where he had gone. Many prayers had fervently gone up to heaven for him, many tears had been shed over him, and many long and solemn conversations had been held, by an anxious father and mother about him. After about a year, a friend found him in California, and, knowing, the anxiety about him, immediately wrote his father a letter, informing him where he could write to him. The father received the letter, and lost no time in writing his son. The young man took the letter from the office and said, when he saw his father's handwriting, it moved him to his heart. But he determined to read it, as he expressed it, "like a man," and not shed any tears over it, as he thought "weak people" do. He decided, however, not to read it till he was alone. As he was returning, he stopped in a path in the dense forest, and opened the letter, nerving himself against weeping. He thought he was succeeding finely as he read down through the main body of the letter, as he restrained all his tears. At the bottom he saw a postscript, in something like the following words: "My dear son, it is late at night,

and your mother is sitting by my side, bathed in tears, weeping over you.'' His manliness, as he falsely styled it, gave way, and he sank down by the path and wept like a child. Immediately he rose up, and resolved, ''I will go home to my father and mother.'' This illustrates the right change of heart when the sinner resolves to turn and go home.

The balance of the history of the case, illustrates the mercy and goodness of God in receiving the sinner when he turns. As early as possible, he started homeward, and reached his father's house one morning at eight o'clock, and rapped at the door. The father, not knowing that his son was within three thousand miles of home, opened the door, and saw his son. The young man stretched forth his hand and exclaimed, ''O, father, can you forgive me?'' The father's heart melted; he sprang forth and embraced him, replying, ''with all my heart, I forgive you, my dear child.'' In a moment he was brought into the house, and, looking into another apartment, here was the mother, who wept while that letter was being written, approaching, when he cried out, ''O, mother, can you forgive me?'' You know how a good mother can forgive! Young man, your mother stands next to God. If you do so badly that your mother can not forgive you, there is but one more you can go to. Your mother will forgive you when no other human being will forgive. The mother, in an ecstasy, sprang forward and clasped her boy in her arms, exclaiming, ''With all my heart, my dear

child, I forgive you." "So there is joy in heaven among the angels of God when one sinner repents," says Jesus.

How kind and compassionate is our heavenly Father, against whom we have sinned, not only one year, but every year of our life, till we turned to the Lord, to forgive all our sins—blot them from the book of remembrance and remember them no more forever—not even permit them to be mentioned; and how wonderfully ungrateful must man be to refuse to come and accept this most gracious pardon, when freely and mercifully offered! And when we remember that He stands all the day long stretching forth His hands to a gainsaying and disobedient people, the ingratitude is heightened if men and women refuse. By all His tender mercies, then; His goodness, His great love; His wonderful compassion; by the value of your precious souls, by the sufferings of the bleeding, dying Savior; the shame and indignation heaped on Him, when He bore our sins on the cross; by all that is lovely and endearing, be persuaded to turn to the Lord and live forever.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

By ELIJAH GOODWIN

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."—Rom. v:1.

THE subject of justification is one of infinite importance to all the sons of men; hence all should be anxious to fully understand it. To aid the anxious, many sermons have been preached, and much has been written upon this subject; and still, intense darkness and mystery settle upon this awfully grand and glorious theme.

To try to shed a ray of light upon the dark path of those who are seeking justification through the blood of the Lamb, is my design in writing and publishing this discourse.

Greenfield defines the word *dikaioo,* from which we have *justified* in the text, thus: "To declare any one to be what he ought to be, and to treat him as such; to declare one to be blameless, or innocent, and to treat him as such; acquit, absolve," etc.

Then when any one is said in Scripture to be justified, who has been guilty of transgressing God's righteous commands, we understand that the heav-

enly Father has acquitted or absolved him from all guilt, and now treats him as if he never had sinned against Him; and hence it is said, "being justified, we have peace with God." God receives those who are justified, into favor with Himself: and hence they are said to have "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." I John i:3. How happy, then, must be the state of the justified. There is no reflection so intolerable as the thought that God disapproves our conduct. To know that wherever we are, at our lying down and uprising, our outgoing and incoming—the disapprobation of heaven rests upon us—who can bear the thought!

But this is no longer the case with those who are justified. They have peace with God, and therefore stand and rejoice in hope of His glory. Yes, they even rejoice in tribulation, because the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto them.

Now the apostle teaches that we are justified by faith; that it is by faith we have access into this gracious state. If, then, this glorious work is accomplished by faith, there are three questions that naturally arise in the mind:

1. *What is the faith that justifies?*

2. *How is that faith obtained?*

3. *How is that faith to be employed, or exercised, in order to be justified by it?*

A moment's reflection will show the importance

of these questions. If we are to be justified by faith, we want to know what faith is—for if we know not what it is, we do not know whether we have it or not—and thus we might be led to seek for that which we already possess. I have no doubt but this very fact has kept many from enjoying the blessing of justification, long after they possessed the faith necessary to give access into this grace. Instead of using their faith in the way the Scriptures require in order to justification, they have spent their time in seeking, they knew not what. But if we find, upon investigation, that we have not faith, we then wish to know how this faith is to be obtained, that we may seek so as to find. If, however, we find we have the faith, and are not justified, we want to know how this faith is to be employed in order to bring the blessing of justification.

Our future remarks upon this subject, then, will be directed to these interrogations.

1. First, what is that faith by which a sinner is justified? Now faith is some of those simple terms that can be made but little plainer by exposition. It is perfectly understood when applied to any proposition in the universe, excepting that of religion. Why is this the case? It is believed among all Christians, that the Bible contains a revelation from God. A revelation is "the act of disclosing to others what was before unknown to them." (See Webster's Dic.)

Now, suppose I propose to reveal something to

you which you did not know before, and in making that revelation I employ words as the sign of the ideas I wish to communicate, with which you are well acquainted. You fully understand their meaning, as used on all other occasions, but I do not intend these words shall be so understood in this revelation. I have some secret meaning for these words, and yet I do not tell you what the meaning is. I ask, does not this communication fail to be a revelation to you? Nay, it is worse than no communication, for you are misled by the words which I employ. You receive the wrong idea, and having learned that fact, you are left without any definite idea *at all.*

Now we have said, the Bible contains a revelation from God to man. Faith is one of the words employed in that divine communication; and now I ask if this term is not to be understood in the Bible according to its common acceptation, how shall we know what is affirmed? We can not. We will not, therefore, charge the spirit of all grace with thus mocking the miseries and wants of the children of men. In Heb. xi:1 Paul thus defines faith: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." He then gives this example: "Through faith, we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." Here faith is the evidence, or conviction, of that which we see not. We did not see God frame the universe by His almighty word, but by faith we understand the fact. That is, faith is the firm conviction or belief of this

truth. In the sixth verse of the same chapter, the apostle says:

"Without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Here the apostle uses the terms *faith* and *belief*, as expressive of the same idea. Belief that God is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him diligently, is the faith that is necessary, in order to please God. In a word, the faith necessary to justification, is the cordial and undoubting reception of the whole revelation of God to man, contained in that best of all books, the Bible.

But through mercy and goodness, the heavenly Father has embodied the essence and soul-stirring influence of this whole revelation, in three great facts, viz.:

"That Christ Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures; that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." I Cor. xv:3,4.

And to make the matter still more simple, and thus adapt it more fully to our weak capacity, He has summed up the truth of these facts in one leading and fundamental proposition, THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD. This truth is so interwoven with the whole revelation of God to our world, that when it is believed with all the heart, we embrace with it all the truths,

facts, and promises contained in the sacred volume. If we believe that Christ is the Son of God, we believe that he died, was buried, and rose for us. If we believe this, we believe that God is, and that He is a rewarder of all who seek Him aright.

This view of the subject is an entire refutation of the strongest arguments used by the Roman Catholic clergy, against the doctrine that the Bible is the only rule of faith. They say, if this is so, we must read and understand every sentence, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, before we can have faith, or before we know whether we have true faith or not.

We are willing to admit—nay, we are sure—that the more we know of God and His works, as developed in the different dispensations, the more enjoyment we have in our union with Him. But it can not be proved that universal knowledge of all God's dealings, ancient and modern, with men and angels, was ever required, by an apostle, of any man in order to justification. "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest," was the language of Philip to the Ethiopian. And when he replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," he baptized him and he went on his way rejoicing.

The only way in which we can justify this procedure is upon the principle just stated—that is, that this truth is so connected with the whole economy of salvation, that, believing it, we embrace the whole. Now he that believes this truth with all his heart,

may have access into the grace of justification, and may there stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

He may then go on and add to this faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity, until he arrives at the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. And as he grows in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, mercy, grace and peace will be multiplied unto him.

2. Having seen what that faith is that brings the blessing of justification, we will now proceed to consider our second question: HOW IS THAT FAITH OBTAINED?

In answer to this question, read the following Scriptures:

"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." John xx:30,31.

Here the apostle teaches that that faith which gives life in the name of Jesus, which is the faith by which we are justified, is to be obtained through the writings of the witnesses of our Lord and Savior. Notice, the apostle does not merely say that these things were performed that we might believe; but that they were *written* for that purpose. In perfect accordance with this, is the language of our Savior, recorded in John xvii:20: "Neither pray I for these

alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word,'' etc. This passage shows as clear as cloudless noonday, that persons are to believe on Christ, through the word of God, communicated to us by His holy apostles.

The next proof that I will advance is that very familiar Scripture, found in Rom. x:17:

''So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.''

That is just saying that faith comes by hearing the word of God. The reader will notice that this is a general conclusion to which the apostle comes, after asking many very important questions, and this too in the same general connection in which our text stands. It would seem that, after the apostle had stated the general fact that we are justified by faith, and having removed every objection to the justification of the Gentiles by the same faith, he anticipated the very question which we are now considering, and, as if to hush to silence all caviling on the subject, he says, ''Faith comes by hearing the WORD OF GOD.''

We will now present the reader a few examples, in which this doctrine is carried out in a practical illustration. In the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we learn that when the supernatural endowment of the Holy Ghost was received by these apostles, accompanied by a sound as of a mighty, rushing wind, attended by blazing tongues, which sat upon each of them, the wondering multitude

cried out, "These men are full of new wine." All will admit that at this time they had not the faith necessary to justification. These stupendous miracles gave no faith in the name of Christ until they were accompanied by the "WORD OF GOD." But when the divine testimony of the heavenly Father, as spoken by Joel, and David, and these newly inspired apostles of the Lamb, was addressed to their understanding, it carried conviction home to their hearts, and they *"said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do."* Thus you perceive that these persons obtained faith by hearing the "WORD OF GOD."

Of the Samaritans, it is said, "When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Acts viii:12. The Samaritans, then, obtained faith by hearing Philip announce the "THE WORD OF GOD." Again: "And it came to pass in Iconium, that they (Paul and Barnabas) went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake that a great multitude, both of Jews and also of the Greeks, believed." Acts xvi:1.

Thus did all this multitude believe "by hearing the WORD OF GOD" proclaimed by Paul and Barnabas. Once more: "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered,

and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ. And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few." Acts xvii:2-4. Now, I ask, by what means did the people obtain faith? Paul, "as his manner was," announced the great facts concerning Christ, that He died for our sins, was buried, and rose again from the dead, but no persons believed these things. The apostle knowing that "faith comes by hearing the WORD OF GOD," proclaimed that divine testimony in their hearing for three Sabbath days in succession, and the result was that they believed.

When Paul came to Corinth and proclaimed the "WORD OF GOD," it is said "many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were baptized." Acts xviii:8. The Corinthians, then, believed by hearing the "WORD OF GOD." In accordance with this fact, the apostle asks them, "who then is Paul or Apollos but ministers by whom ye believed?" I Cor. iii:5.

From the testimony now presented, illustrated and enforced by the numerous examples we have submitted, we shall consider that it is fully proved that the faith which is necessary in order to justification, is obtained through the word of God, given by holy prophets and apostles, and recorded in the sacred volume, the BIBLE.

3. We now come to our third question, viz.: *How*

must faith be employed, in order to be justified by it?

I would now inquire, first of all, does faith justify? We answer with an emphatic NO; for the apostle says, "it is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" Rom. vii:33,34. If, then, it is God who justifies, or pardons the sinner—and yet, it is said, we are justified by faith—I ask again, is there anything mysterious in faith? Does the sinner merit pardon by believing? No one will affirm that he does; for this would be to say that there is so much value in faith, that we could even purchase a seat in the world of glory with it! This would make the enjoyment of heaven to be of debt, and not by grace. If, then, it is God that justifies, and we are justified by faith—and yet, faith does not purchase pardon—we ask again, does faith influence God to pardon the believer? Does the powerful influence of faith pass upon the Supreme Being, and move him to be gracious to the sinner? Does faith "MOVE THE HAND THAT MOVES THE WORLD?"

Before I proceed to investigate the subject farther, I wish to state a few plain propositions:

1. "It is God that justifies." This we have stated before, but I wish it to be riveted on the mind. We can not pardon our own sins, nor the sins of our neighbor. If we are ever pardoned, God must do it.

2. If God justifies a sinner at all, he does it on the principle of mercy. We can not purchase par-

don of the Lord, for this plain reason: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." We have nothing which we can call our own, with which to purchase God's favor. We, ourselves, belong to God, with all we have and are. Should the sinner offer his body as a ransom for his soul, the Lord might respond, "You belong to me, both soul and body." O! when we take this view of the subject of justification, who will not stand, and wonder, and adore the grace of God, who has thus offered pardon to a rebellious world, "Without money and without price"?

3. God has a right, as the Sovereign of the universe, to stipulate His own terms of pardon, or justification. No person can object to this, seeing that the Lord pardons of entire mercy, without any merit on our part. If we purchased pardon of the Lord, then we might with some propriety desire to have some hand in stipulating the terms. But as we are poor, helpless, blind, sinful, and rebellious creatures, we should be willing for the merciful Father of Spirits to set his own terms of pardon. Though all admit the truth of this proposition, yet many terms of pardon have been offered to the world, which God never proposed, but which are the mere inventions of men!

4. If God proposes terms of pardon to man, for man's benefit, it is reasonable to suppose that these terms will be so plainly revealed, that all persons interested may understand and comply with them. This, we affirm, is true in reference to the Gospel

terms of pardon—so that no person who learns what to do to be saved, from the *New Testament,* need go seeking pardon for weeks, and months, and even years, as some have done.

5. The last proposition that I now wish to make is, that if God has stipulated his own terms of pardon, we ought to submit and comply with them if we wish to be pardoned. We ought not to utter the first murmur, nor raise the least objection, but we should go forward and obey God and live.

But the man without faith has no disposition or will to comply with these terms, and hence, he remains unjustified. But when he believes in Christ with all his heart, he beholds by faith the overwhelming facts of the Gospel, which express the love of God to a ruined world in such strong terms that his heart is affected, and he cries out,

> "I yield, I yield:
> I can hold out no more.
> I sink, by dying love compelled,
> And own Thee conqueror."

Thus his faith subdues his will, and purifies his heart, and influences him to say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The Gospel directs him to heaven's appointed terms of pardon. Moved forward by the mighty power of his faith in all the facts, commands and promises of the gospel, he complies with these terms and is justified, and "stands and rejoices in hope of the glory of God."

Having seen that when persons were justified by

faith, in the days of the apostles, they obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine delivered them, we will now endeavor to show what that form of doctrine is. We would first suggest that doctrine can not be obeyed—doctrine is to be believed, and the commandments are to be obeyed. Again, the form of anything is not the thing itself, but a representation of it. The likeness of George Washington, which the reader may have in his room, is not George Washington, but the form, or representation of him. So, the form of doctrine, in obedience to which persons are justified, is a representation of that doctrine, and as there can be no obedience where there is no command, this form of doctrine must be composed of a class of commands which represents the doctrine.

Now, if we can ascertain what the doctrine is, we will be better prepared to understand its form. The leading, all-important, and fundamental points in the Gospel of Christ, or Christian doctrine, are summed up by Paul thus: "How that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." I Cor. xv:3,4. In this doctrine, which the apostle calls the Gospel, there are three points: A. Christ died for sin. B. He was buried. C. He rose again.

Now, I ask every Bible student to point out three commands that will represent or show forth these facts. Will *faith alone* do it? When faith in these facts kills the love of sin in the believer's heart, it

may show forth the death of Christ; but two facts in the doctrine remain unrepresented. There must then be in the form of doctrine, some command, by obeying which, the believer shows forth the burial and resurrection of our blessed Lord. But let us hear Paul himself upon this subject, in the same chapter where he mentions the form of doctrine.

"What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Rom. vi:1,2. Here is the first point in the form of doctrine. The first item in the doctrine is, that we die to sin. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are (or were, to continue the same tense), buried with him, by baptism, into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." V.3,4.

In this form is represented the death of Christ, in our death to sin; His burial in our immersion, and His resurrection in our rising from the watery grave, to walk in newness of life. This, then, must be the form of doctrine which persons obeyed when they were made free from sin, under the immediate teaching of the inspired apostles of the Lamb. Hence, Paul goes on to say: "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." V.5.

With this view agrees the teaching of Christ and

His holy apostles. Christ commanded his witnesses to go and preach the Gospel to every creature, assuring them that "he who believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mark xvi:16. Hence, when Peter announced this form of doctrine to the heart-smitten multitude, who inquired of him what they must do to be justified, he said, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts ii:38. This, too, accounts for the language of Ananias to Saul, who was anxiously seeking this justification: "Why tarriest thou?" said he; "arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts xxii:16.

To the same effect speaks this same Saul, afterward called Paul, when he says, "According to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Tit. iii:5. That the washing of regeneration here spoken of, is baptism, we have the testimony of Dr. A. Clarke, and Dr. James McKnight, the former a distinguished commentator of the Methodist Episcopal Church—the latter, an unsurpassed translator and commentary writer of the Presbyterian Church. Dr. Clarke says, on this washing: "Undoubtedly, the apostle here means *baptism,* the rite by which persons were admitted into the church, and the *visible sign* of the cleansing, purifying influences of the Holy Spirit, which the apostle immediately subjoins. Baptism

is only a *sign*, and therefore should never be separated from the thing signified—but it is a *rite* commanded by God Himself, and therefore, the thing signified should never be expected without it.'' That is, if we understand the doctor correctly, the cleansing influence of the Holy Spirit should never be expected, without baptism.

Dr. McKnight says: ''Through the bath of regeneration—through baptism, called the bath of regeneration, not because any change in the nature of the baptized person is produced by baptism—but because it is an emblem of the purification of the soul from sin.'' Thus does this great scholar and critic teach that this washing, which he renders bath, —this rendering being more in accordance with the original—is baptism. It is strange, however, that he, with so many others, should call baptism ''an emblem of the purification of the soul from sin,'' and a ''sign of the purifying influence of the Holy Spirit,'' when nothing of this kind is found in the whole *New Testament.*

Baptism is never called a sign of regeneration, nor an emblem of the Spirit's influence, by any apostle of Christ whose writings have come down to us. But those who thus teach, must account to the great head of the church for it.

Now, of the things which we have written, this is the sum: God has loved the world, and sent his Son to die for sinners; Christ has manifested that love by all he did and suffered for us; faith in God's

love thus manifested, slays the enmity of the heart, so that by faith the sinner dies to the love and practice of sin—his faith in God's promises, influences him to reform and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins—and when he thus obeys from the heart this form of doctrine, he is made free from sin, and becomes a servant of righteousness.

In conclusion, let me say to all who have thus been justified by faith, be faithful in the discharge of all the holy obligations of Christianity, that you may finally enter into that rest that remaineth for the people of God. May the great Lord of all enable us all so to live, that we may enjoy His favor in life, His loving kindness in death, and His holy presence in eternity.

HOW ARE PERSONS MADE BELIEVERS

By BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Text.—"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.''—Rom. x:17.

THIS text is selected because it expresses the general theme for this discourse, which is, *How are persons made believers?* The question has been settled as to what persons should believe to become Christians, or disciples of Christ, in the foregoing discourse. The purpose, in this discourse, is to settle the question as to *how* persons are made believers. What means does our Heavenly Father employ to induce men and women to believe on Christ as the Savior of the world?

There are two theories about this, so widely different, that if either one of them is right the other is wrong. One of these theories asserts that God puts forth an *immediate* power, or influence of His Spirit from Himself, or a *direct* influence to the soul of the unbeliever, and makes him a believer. The other theory asserts that God puts forth His power or influence through Christ, the apostles, through

the Holy Spirit that was in and inspired the apostles, and through the Gospel preached by the apostles, and makes believers. These two theories are wholly irreconcilable. If the one is correct, the other is a delusion, a deception, a cheat. It is useless to talk of charity. Charity may extend to erring people in kindness, pity, and compassion, but no charity can reconcile two theories about the same thing, so different, as that God makes believers by an *immediate* influence, and that he does it by a *mediate* influence. If this work of making a believer is done in one of these ways, it is not done in the other way. This is self-evident.

But now, the question arises, how is this matter to be settled? To what can an appeal be made as authority to settle it? Shall the case be referred to the man who says: "I know the time and place when the immediate power came, took effect on my heart and made me a believer. I was not reading the word nor hearing the Gospel, and I know that I was made a believer by the immediate power."

If the question is to be left to such a man as this, it is useless to continue this discourse. There are many men who will testify the same as this man; but if such testimony is to be regarded, Mormonism, Quakerism, Shakerism, or any other imposture ever imposed on credulous man, can be proved, for they all have any amount of witnesses of the same kind. These witnesses care not what the Bible says, what the Lord or the apostles have said. They refer you

to what they have *experienced,* but in their case you have nothing but the testimony of their tongue. They will not be regarded in this discourse, nor any witnesses, except such as the Lord has shown to be his witnesses, by the most awful, grand, and sublime displays of supernatural power ever addressed to the senses of mortal man. The subject will be treated exclusively for those who believe the Bible. Those who do not believe the Bible will be addressed in another discourse. The Bible is the supreme authority, and the writer will proceed as if every reader believed and regarded it. Indeed, he will, for the time being, assume that every person reading after him believes and regards it.

Let there be a clear understanding, then, at the start. The question is not whether God makes believers. We all admit that God makes believers. The question is not whether He makes believers by the Holy Spirit. We all admit that God makes believers by the Holy Spirit. Nor is it whether He does it by His power. We all admit that God makes believers by the Holy Spirit and by His power. But does He put forth His power through Christ, through the apostles, through the Spirit in the apostles, through the Gospel preached by the apostles? Or does He put forth His power or influence to make believers immediately from Himself to the soul of the sinner, not through Christ, nor through the apostles, nor the word? This is the question to be settled by Scripture.

The first Scripture introduced will be found Acts xi:14. It is the language of an angel of God to Cornelius, a centurion, of the Italian band. The angel commended Cornelius to send for Peter, adding, that "when he is come, he shall tell you words whereby you and your house shall be saved." The particular point in this language, to which special attention is invited, is that Cornelius and his house were to be saved by *words,* and not *without words.* Any theory proposing to make believers and save men *without words* can not be received, while the Lord's system, in which men are *saved by words,* is regarded. The question is not whether the Lord *can* save men without words, but whether He *does* in the system revealed in the Bible. The angel says by *words,* and let him who says *without words* bring his proof.

The next Scripture introduced is found Matt. xiii. It is our Lord's teaching in the parable of the sower. It is a mercy on us that the Lord explained this parable, as the people of our time would most likely never have found the meaning of it. He says: "Some seed fell by the way side," some "fell on stony places," some "fell among thorns," and "other seed fell on good ground." The first thing is to determine what the "seed" in this parable stands for, or represents. This the Lord explains—not in learned and difficult terms, but in the most laconic, explicit and simple terms:

"The seed is the word of God."

Any human being, with intelligence enough to be accountable, can understand, that the seed of the kingdom is the word of God. All the products of the kingdom spring from the seed of the kingdom, under the divine blessing. No matter how rich your ground, nor how well you prepare it, nor how honest you labor, you can not raise wheat nor corn without seed; no matter how good the ground, how honestly you labor, nor how much the Lord blesses you with rains, sunshine, and a genial season, you must have the seed. It is indispensable. In the same way, in the kingdom, we must have the seed of the kingdom, or we can not have the products of the kingdom.

Faith is the very first product of the kingdom, and you can not have it without the seed of the kingdom, the word of God. Men may theorize about faith, the faith of Christ without hearing the Gospel, the seed of the kingdom, from which faith comes, but they will never have it. As well might men talk of corn, wheat, or any other product of the ground without the seed ordained of God, as to talk of faith without the seed of the kingdom, ordained of God to produce faith. Since the Lord ascended to heaven, a believer in Christ has not been found whose faith did not, directly or indirectly, come from the Gospel.

The next thing in order is the way-side ground. What does it represent? It represents an idle, indifferent, and careless hearer, who does not understand the word when he hears it. There are such men in

all communities. There is no such thing as commanding their attention; they are off, and talking about other things, or frequently nothing, or, at most, nothing of consequence; they never give anything more than a slight and indifferent hearing to the word. But when they do this, the Lord says, "Then straightway comes the devil, and catches the word of God out of their heart."

Do you say "There is no devil?" If you do, this discourse is not intended for you; this discourse is intended for, and addressed to such as believe the Bible. The Lord says, "Then straight way comes the devil and catches away the word." If you do not believe there is a devil, you do not believe Jesus, and are a skeptic. When this idle hearer, represented by the way-side ground, gives a slight hearing to the word, "then straightway comes the devil." You inquire, what can his mission be? What has aroused him and called him up? A man has been hearing the word, and his fiendish, malignant, and premeditated design is to defeat the word of God, and thus defeat the divine means appointed to make him a believer and save him.

Hear the Lord describe His work in His own inimitable style: "Then straightway comes the devil and catches away the word." Why does he catch away the word out of his heart? The Lord answers, "Lest he should believe and be saved." Luke viii:12. This shows that the word of God is the seed; that it is sown in the heart, that men should believe it and

be saved; that the devil understands this work, and when the seed is sown in a man's heart, he comes and catches it away out of his heart, lest he should believe and be saved.

What does the stony ground stand for, or represent, in this parable? It represents a hearer, not so hard as the one just described, but one that hears the Word with pleasure at first, and then finds that he will suffer persecution, and "straightway becomes offended because of the word." He yields the Word —gives it up. This is the end of the matter with him. You need not follow him, expecting to find where some *immediate* power made him a believer, converted him, made him a Christian, and saved him, after he had become offended because of the Word, and turned his ear away from it. There is no power that the Lord brings to bear on men who turn their ear away from the Gospel, and will not hear it, that converts them and saves them *without the word.* "He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." Prov. xxviii:9.

What does the thorny ground represent? It represents a hearer not so bad as either of those of which mention has been made; it represents a man who receives the Word with pleasure at first, is delighted with it and happy, but subsequently is drawn into some of the business operations of the world—banking, merchandizing, stock-trading, etc., and whose whole mind and heart are literally over-

whelmed in the affairs of this life; and the Lord says:

"The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word out of his heart."

Here you may bid adieu to his professions of religion. When the Word of God is by any means taken away out of a man's heart, there is an end to all faith, piety, and devotion to the Lord. In every case, the Lord keeps it in view that "the good seed," which is the Word of God, must not only be sown in the heart, but remain in it, or none of the good fruits of the kingdom can be brought forth.

What does the good ground represent? It represents the man who receives the word of God into a good and honest heart, understands it, and, as explained in the parallel passage in Luke, brings forth much fruit. The good and *honest heart* is the soil for the good seed, the Word of God. This is the Lord's method of producing the fruits of the kingdom: the good seed, the word of God, sown in good and honest hearts. He does not produce these good fruits of the kingdom without this good seed of the kingdom, the Word of God. The Lord does not talk either of producing these good fruits by sowing the seed in a *totally depraved* heart, but in a *good and honest* heart. If all men are born totally depraved, there could not be in any of them a *good and honest heart.*

But instead of all men in an unconverted state being *totally* depraved, and consequently all on one

common level, the Lord here divides them off into six classes; the good ground he divides into three classes. Some of it brings thirty fold, some sixty, and some a hundred fold. Thirty fold is good, sixty fold is better, and a hundred fold best. The thorny ground is bad, the stony ground worse, and the wayside worst. Instead, then, of all unregenerate men being totally depraved, and, consequently, precisely alike, He classifies them in six classes; good, better, and best; bad, worse and worst. Paul makes the same classification—I Cor. iii:9-12—with his illustration of gold, silver, precious stones; wood, hay, stubble. Precious stones are good material to go into a building to be tried by fire, silver is better, and gold is best; wood is bad material, hay worse, and stubble is worst.

This only recognizes what all men of intelligence observe: that whatever theories preachers may advocate, all men are not bad or good alike in an unregenerate state, and, consequently, not *totally depraved,* nor so depraved that they can not receive the good seed, the Word of God, into good and honest hearts, understand it, and bring forth fruit to the honor and glory of God. The seed of the kingdom is the Word of God, and a good and honest heart is the soil, of the Lord's own appointment, to bring forth the fruits of the kingdom of God. All this shows that there is no room for the idle speculation that some immediate power or influence must give faith. The Son of Man sows, or causes to be sown,

the good seed of the kingdom, the Word of God. This good seed is received into a good and honest heart that understands it, and brings forth much fruit.

This perfectly corresponds with our Lord's quotation from the prophets in the same chapter—Matt. xiii:13,14,15—"By hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing, you shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should turn, and I should heal them."

The trouble with these people, or the reason they were not turned to the Lord, was not in some decree the Lord had made before the beginning of time, nor that they were so depraved that they could not hear nor believe, nor that the Lord would not send His power to enable them to believe; but the reason was *in themselves,* in perversity, which they *could* have avoided, but *would not.* Their hearts had *grown,* or *become* gross. It was not so created, but had *become so.* Their ears had *become* dull of hearing. They were not so created, nor by inheritance, but had *become so.* Their eyes they had closed. They had done this themselves. It was not something in their creation, that they had inherited from Adam, or in any decree of God, but an act of *their own,* done for a purpose; *"lest they should see with their eyes,*

hear with their ears, understand with their heart and turn, and I should heal them." They are themselves blamed for the failure, which could not be the case if they were totally depraved and could not believe, repent, nor turn to the Lord.

It is now appropriate that we should have a few clear statements of Scripture, showing how persons are made believers. The first scripture adduced on this point, will be found John xvii:20-21: "I pray not for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word." For whom does the Lord pray here? You answer, For them who believe. True; but He is more explicit, and adds, for "them who shall believe *on me through their word.*" If there are those whose faith did not come through their word—the word of the apostles —they are not included in this prayer. The Lord did not here pray for them, but for those who should believe on Him through their word. This one passage ought to settle the question as to how faith comes with people who believe the Scriptures.

The apostle John bears the following testimony, John xx:30,31: "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through His name." Here are three grand questions answered:

1. What are these things written for? That you might believe. The apostle here shows the Lord's plan of making believers, or what He has done, that men might believe, or to make faith accessible to them, or put it in their power to believe. These things are written that you *might believe.*

2. What must we believe? That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

3. What is the purpose of our believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? That we might have life through His name. This is the great purpose of our faith, or to give us the privilege of life through His name.

How beautifully the benevolence of God stands out in all this. Man can not believe, without the truth to be believed. The Lord gives the truth, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. This truth can not be believed by man, unless revealed to him, with the testimony required to make it credible. The things in the divine records of testimony given by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, concerning Jesus, are written that we might believe, and that believing we might have life through His name.

The testimony of Peter is in point here, Acts xv:7: "God made choice among us, that the Gentiles, by my mouth, should hear the word of the Gospel and believe." This is as clear as language can express anything. If it was the choice of God, that the Gentiles, by the mouth of Peter, should hear

the word of the Gospel, and believe, it was not His choice that they should believe *without the Word.*

Shall the great apostle to the Gentiles be called to testify in the case, as to how faith comes? He says, Rom. x:17: "So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." If he had said, Faith comes by *feeling,* by *an immediate* influence of the Spirit, or by anything else besides *hearing,* it would have been just as easy to so preach. But he settles the question by saying, in so many words, that faith comes by *hearing.* He does not stop at this, but explicitly states what we must hear—that it must be the word of God. He even reasons the matter out. Please hear him: "How, then, shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they are sent?" Rom. x:14,15. If the Lord had not called and sent the apostles to preach the Gospel, we never could have heard it; if we had never heard it, we never could have believed it; if we had never believed it, we could not have called on the name of the Lord, and, consequently, could not have been saved. This, then, is a settlement of the question of faith coming without the word.

But some man objects, remarking that it was granted, at the outset, that God makes men believers. But He does it *by means.* That is precisely the point under investigation. Does He make believers

by an immediate influence or power from Himself, exerted on the heart of the sinner, or does He make believers through means? This has been the question from the commencement of this discourse. But was it not granted, at the outset, that He makes believers by the Holy Spirit? It was, and without any reservation. He unquestionably does it by the Holy Spirit. But can it not be that he makes believers through the Gospel and by the Holy Spirit? There can be no difficulty in this, for the Gospel itself was preached by the Holy Spirit, sent down from heaven, which things the angels desired to look into. See I Pet. i:12. Paul says of these things, "But God has revealed them to us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God." See I Cor. ii:10. The very same Gospel preached by the apostles, was preached also by the Holy Spirit speaking in them. Indeed, it was not the apostles that spoke, but the Spirit spoke in them; and the person who believed the words which the Holy Spirit spoke, certainly was made a believer by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit operates on men by words or through words. Please attend to a few examples:

1. "Which things also we speak, not in the *words* which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches." See I Cor. ii:13. The Holy Spirit teaches in *words*, then.

2. The Lord said to the apostles, Matt. x:20, "For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of

your Father which speaks in you." The Spirit of the Father *speaks* in the apostles, and those who hear His words and believe them, are certainly made believers by the Spirit. Many men are lauding the Spirit for what they ascribe to Him, as a work done *without words,* while they attend not to the words spoken by the Spirit.

3. How did the Spirit operate on Philip to induce him to join himself to the chariot? Acts viii:29. "The Spirit said to Philip, join yourself to this chariot." The Spirit *said*—he uttered words, that were remembered and embodied in Luke's narrative —"join yourself to this chariot." The Spirit, by words, moved him or influenced him to join the chariot.

4. How did the Spirit influence Peter to go down to the three messengers from Cornelius when he was on the housetop, in Joppa? Luke says, Acts x:19, "While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said to him, Behold, three men seek you; rise, therefore, and go down and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them." The Spirit operated on him through *words.* These words were remembered by Peter, and reported, so that Luke embraced them in his narrative.

5. Paul says, I Tim. iv:1, "Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and teaching concerning demons; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot

iron." How is the Spirit said here to operate? The Spirit *speaks,* and not only speaks, but "speaks expressly."

6. Again Paul says, Heb. iii:7, quoting from the Psalms: "Wherefore, as the Holy Spirit says, Today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted, proved me, and saw my works forty years in the wilderness." How did the Holy Spirit operate in the time of David? By *words*: "The Holy Spirit says." What the Holy Spirit says in this instance is repeated. Heb. iv:7.

7. Rev. xiv:13, we have a clear instance of the Spirit speaking: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." We not only have the words, "Yea, says the Spirit," but the precise *words said.*

8. Among the last words of the book of God, we find this: "And the Spirit and the Bride say come." See Rev. xxii:17. How does the Bride, or the Church, say come? She says it in *words.* In the same way the Spirit of God says Come. He says it in *words.*

9. If it is desirable to lengthen out the lists of Scripture references, in the second and third chapters of Revelation the following expression is found seven times: "Hear what the Spirit says to the churches." We are not commanded to *feel* some

impression that the Spirit makes on our hearts *without words,* but to *hear what the Spirit says.*

Here, then, are some fifteen passages referred to, in which it is seen that the Holy Spirit operates through or by words. In this class of Scriptures it is also clearly shown that the Gospel, preached by the apostles, was not in *their words,* but in the *words of the Holy Spirit.* The influence or power, then, of these words of the Holy Spirit, is the influence or power of the Holy Spirit, and the man made a believer by these words of the Spirit, is made a believer by the Holy Spirit. This is simply intuitively clear and certain.

In Rom. i:16, we are taught by Paul that the Gospel is the power of God to salvation to every one that believes, both to the Jew and also to the Greek. It is not power of God, *a* power of God, or one of his powers to salvation, but *the* power or influence of God for salvation, not to *some,* but to *every one that believes.* That is, all that are saved at all. The power or influence of God for salvation is the power or influence of Christ, and also the power or influence of the Holy Spirit. God does not exercise one power or influence, the Savior another, and the Holy Spirit another; but the influence or power of God is also the influence of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. There is *one* power or influence of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the apostles. That one influence God puts forth through Christ, through the Holy Spirit in the apostles, through the apostles, and

through the word, to make believers, and turn them to God.

The man who yields to that *one* influence, and is led by it, yields to and is led by the power or influence of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the apostles, and the word; and the man who turns his ear away from and resists that *one* influence, turns his ear away from and resists God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the apostles, and the Gospel, and will certainly be lost. He turns his ear away from and resists *the* power of God for salvation. No matter if he does say he believes in the *immediate* power; no matter if he *does really* believe in the *immediate,* converting power; that is not mentioned in the word of God, and there is not one particle of authority for looking for it. The Gospel is the power of God to salvation to every one that believes.

But when we are talking of "converting power or influence," what is the precise meaning? Some kinds of power or influence will take effect on you, if you are placed in range, whether you understand anything about them or not. If you place yourself in the cold, it will take effect on you whether you know anything about it or not. The same is true of heat. If you come in contact with an electric battery, no matter whether you know anything about it or not, you will be shocked. The same is true of the influence of contagion. But these all take effect on the *body,* the flesh, and blood. The influence or power is rather, and to some extent, mys-

terious, and we may not be able to know precisely how it takes effect; but we know it does not come through the mind or understanding to the system, but through the system to the mind. But spiritual influence or power does not take effect in the flesh and blood, or in the physical man, only as it does it through the understanding. Put a man in an assembly where the greatest spiritual impression ever made exists, *blind and deaf,* and the power or influence will take no effect on him. But electricity will take effect on him as readily as those who see and hear. Gravitation takes effect on him; so does pestilence, heat, and cold. The reason is, that these latter affect the body only—the mere animal man. But the power of God for salvation is spiritual, and relates, not to the animal, but to the *spiritual man.*

The intangible and almost unintelligible idea that some appear to have in reference to this matter is, that in order to get conversion a man must place himself in a favorable position, make himself passive, and, "in the Lord's own good time," the power will come, make him a believer, and convert him. On this same intangible and unintelligible vague idea, modern Spiritualists have grafted the theory that, by sitting in circles, holding each other's hands, and becoming passive, the spirits will communicate with them. These deluded men have already gone into some of the most romantic, vague, and ridiculous absurdities ever known among intelligent and ac-

countable beings. But spiritual power or influence does not take effect in the flesh and blood, but in the *spirit.* It is not a subtle influence, that is *felt* in the flesh, like electricity, cold, or heat, and that does not come through the mind. It is not a subtle influence, that you sit and watch for, as a Quaker preacher watching for the spirit to move him to speak, and that manifests itself first by some strange sensation in the flesh, or some queer feeling. The power of God to make believers and save men does not take effect in the flesh of men, but in the *spirit.* It is spiritual power, put forth in spiritual intelligence, to the human understanding.

As the intention is here to develop and discuss the subject pretty thoroughly, the inquiry may be put as follows: *Is the power that God exercises in making believers, and turning men to God, the power of intelligence addressed to the human understanding?* Or, *is it a subtle power of the Spirit immediately from God, that takes effect on man, as heat, cold or electricity, not in words, addressed to the human understanding, that makes believers and turns men to God?* It can not be this latter, for the following reasons:

1. If it is an *immediate* power or influence, it is without the *Mediator,* and men are made believers and turned to God, or converted without Christ, the Mediator between God and men. An immediate power or influence is a power or influence without a medium or mediator. The first objection to this

theory is, then, that it sets aside the Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, in turning men to God.

2. It sets aside the mission of the apostles, in making believers and turning men to God, and sets up a theory of making believers by an immediate power or influence without the apostles. This we know is not the Lord's way.

3. It sets aside the work of the Church entirely in making believers, and makes believers and turns men to God without the Church. In this theory the Church does not work with God at all in converting sinners.

4. It sets aside the Gospel entirely in making believers and turning men to God. The Gospel has nothing to do with it, performs no part in it, and is completely nullified by this theory, so far as converting sinners is concerned.

5. All Bibles, tracts, books, papers, and missionaries, as means for converting sinners, are swept away by this theory forever. If God, by an immediate power or influence, makes believers and turns men to God, all these means are a nullity.

6. All meetings for preaching to sinners, the preaching to them, and all talk to them, is sheer mockery if they are made Christians by an *immediate* power.

7. Human accountability is at an end, so far as being made believers and turning to God, if men are made believers and turned to God by an *immediate* influence. If the influence comes and makes a man a

believer, the work is done. If it does not come and make him a believer, he is not made a believer. Who is to blame if the power does not come? Who is to be praised if the power does come? This strikes out all idea of responsibility in believing or not believing. If a man is not made a believer it is not his fault, and the reason is not in him but in God, who *could* send the power and make him a believer, but *would not.*

It may be deliberately stated, and is here deliberately stated, that this theory of men being made believers and turned to God by an immediate influence, has done more harm and prevented more sincere and honest people from becoming Christians, than any other one error in the land, or even infidelity itself.

But that the power the Lord exercises in making believers and turning men to God, is the power of intelligence addressed to the human understanding, is clear from the following:

1. Because the Gospel is the power of God to salvation. The power in the Gospel is the power of intelligence. It contains intelligence, and is addressed to men and women, and, when they hear it, they are moved by this intelligence to believe and turn.

2. Paul says, I Cor. iv:15: "I have begotten you through the Gospel." The literal meaning is, "I have made you believers through the Gospel." If they were begotten, or made believers through the

Gospel, it was not by an immediate power without the Gospel. Through the Gospel, is by bringing the power of the intelligence in the Gospel to bear on their minds or understandings.

3. The Lord, in the commission, Matt. xxiii:19, said, "Go, disciple all nations"; and, Mark xvi:16, "Preach the Gospel to every creature"; and added, "He who believes." He who believes what? The Gospel—the intelligence preached. This shows that the Lord intended intelligence to be brought to bear on their understandings, and for them to believe it.

4. In Acts xxvi:18, we find the words of Paul, where he says the Lord sent him to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God." The Lord, then, through Paul, opened the eyes and *turned* the Gentiles, or converted them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. This he did by bringing the divine intelligence of the Gospel to bear on their minds.

5. Paul says, I Cor. i:21, "It pleased God by the foolishness of *preaching* to save them that believe." This does not mean that it pleased God, by an immediate influence, to save men without preaching.

6. In all cases, in the time of the apostles, where persons were made believers and turned to the Lord, the Gospel and some one to preach it were present. There is not an instance of one being converted without the Gospel.

7. James says, Jas. i:18, "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth." This is true of all who are begotten of God. It is by the word of truth, and not without the word of truth, that they are begotten of God.

8. Peter also says: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever." See I Pet. i:23. How are persons "born again," or *begotten* again? "Not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by *the word of God.*" Born, or begotten, used as a figure, means being *made believers.* This is done by the word of God.

9. Men are turned to God by Christ. "No man comes to the Father but by me," says the Lord. John xiv:6. It is through Him, as the Mediator between God and men.

The Almighty puts forth intelligence through Christ, through the apostles, through the Holy Spirit, and through the Gospel, preached by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven to the understanding and heart of the sinner, makes him a believer, and turns him to the Lord. This work is in some instances, ascribed to God; in some instances, to Christ; in some instances, to the apostles; in some instances to the Holy Spirit; and, in some instances, to the word. But he who would express the whole, in one sentence, says, God does this work through Christ, the apostles, the Holy Spirit, and the Gospel. But it is the same, no matter whether ascribed to God,

Christ, the Holy Spirit, the apostles, or the word. The power of God, of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit is put forth, through the Gospel, to save man.

But some one objects, saying, Do you think there is power in the mere word to quicken a sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, and turn him to God? Men of faith never say, "the *mere* Word," nor "the *bare* word," when speaking of the Word of God, which is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, but call it *the word of God*. The power of God is in it, the power of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit is in it. It would be precisely the same power if put forth *immediately*. Men must be deluded beyond description, if they can not see that it is neither more nor less than the power of God for salvation that is put forth in the Gospel. No one argues that sinners can be quickened *without* the power of God; but the Gospel is the power of God. That power, we have now fully seen, is not a subtle influence, that takes effect in the human system, without intelligence, but it is the power of intelligence addressed to the mind.

Hence, not a convert was ever made to Christ, where the divine intelligence of the Gospel was not, in some way, conveyed to the mind. Nor was a convert ever made to any system of religion, either true or false, without conveying a knowledge of the same to the mind. The converts, too, are the same in kind as the operators. If the operators are Methodists, the converts are Methodists. If the operators are Pres-

byterians, the converts are Presbyterians. If the operators are Christians, the converts are Christians, and nothing else. But who, in his right mind, believes that the Holy Spirit operates, by an immediate influence, on the hearts of the people in a Methodist meeting, and converts people to Methodism; then in a Baptist meeting, and makes Baptists; and then in a Presbyterian meeting, and makes Presbyterians? The power of the Spirit is in the Gospel, and when that is brought to bear on the minds of men, it leads them to believe on Christ, turn to God, and become *Christians,* and nothing else.

But some one is ready to inquire, Is there power in mere ink and paper? Certainly there is no power in mere ink and paper to turn a sinner to God, but there is power in the *divine intelligence,* communicated through signs of ideas, made in ink on paper—viz., the Gospel—the power of God to salvation. The power is not in the words, only as the intelligence is in and communicated through the words. Why should any man doubt that there is power in the intelligence of the Gospel to turn men to God, when he has seen the power in the proclamation of a president or a general, move a nation? Why should sensible people doubt the power of intelligence, when they have seen a whole family stricken to the heart by a single dispatch of three lines, announcing the death of some beloved friend? If uninspired communications, about earthly things, can strike grief or joy through a whole family or community, why may not

a proclamation from the Almighty Father of heaven and earth involving the destiny of the human race, take effect on the hearts of mankind?

But why argue that which men and women have seen all over the land? Who has not seen whole audiences melted to tears under the preaching of the Gospel? Who has not seen the most wicked and stout-hearted men melted down, subdued and penitent as little children, under the overwhelming power of the Gospel, and, in scores, coming and yielding themselves to the authority of Heaven? What if teachers of religion have told the people that the word of God is a *dead letter*—that it is powerless, etc.? Have not men been seen visiting the people from house to house, warning them not to hear the man who preaches nothing but the Word, thus contradicting all they have said? They know there is power in it, and dread that power. Why do not these men, claiming such wonderful spiritual illumination—the immediate influence of the Spirit—come out and put to flight the men who preach the Word and nothing else? There is a good reason for it. They are weak as water before the men who preach the Word and nothing else. Trepidation seizes their souls the moment you suggest a meeting with a man who preaches nothing but the Word.

What did the Lord command to be preached?—"Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." "Preach the word." What were men required to believe? Of course to believe what

was preached—the Gospel. What were men to obey? Christ is the author of eternal salvation to them that *obey Him,* and He will take vengeance on them who obey not the Gospel. What are men to hope for? For all things which the Lord has promised. This places the responsibility where it is, and where it ought to be—on the part of man. God has given him the Gospel and ability to believe it. If he does not believe the Divine and credible testimony which God has given of His Son, as he has the ability to do, God can be just and good, and condemn him for not believing. God has laid commandments before man, just, reasonable, and easy, and given him ability to *obey;* and therefore if he does *not* obey, the Lord can be just in condemning him for disobedience.

This is in perfect accordance with all the invitations of the Gospel, and with our Lord's weeping over Jerusalem, and exclaiming, "How oft would I have gathered your children, but you would not." Again, He says, "You would not come to me that you might have life." Again: "He is not willing that any should perish, but all should come to repentance." "The Spirit says, Come; and the bride says, Come; and whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." "All the day long have I stretched forth my hand to a gainsaying and a disobedient people." These and many other expressions of the Scripture are foolishness with the idea of this direct converting power, of which we hear so much, without which a man can not believe, repent, or do any-

thing pleasing to God. All such invitations and expressions involve the idea that man is free; that he *can* turn to God, and may justly be condemned if he does not do it.

But if men can not believe, repent, and turn to God till an immediate power is sent to make them believers, how can they be justly condemned for their unbelief before the power comes to make them believers? They are no more to blame for not believing before this power comes, than a mill-wheel is for not turning before the power that turns it is put on. If two men are sitting on the same seat, and the power comes and makes one a believer, and leaves the other without the power to believe, no justice can blame the one left for not believing. This would not be leaving men without a cloak for their unbelief; but it is making a cloak for their unbelief where the Lord left them without one.

Does a man say he can not pray with the view here advocated—that if the Lord does not make believers, and turn sinners to God, by an immediate influence of the Spirit, the Lord can not answer prayer? In your empty theorizing, you have thus limited the Almighty and circumscribed Him to your narrow theory. Your faith, too, is limited to your narrow theory, so that you not only do not believe that God does answer prayer without your theory, or in any other way than you have marked out for Him, but you do not believe *He can*. If your theory is exploded, therefore, you will not pray. A little more

faith is what you need. You must believe that the Infinite One can answer the prayers of His saints, whether finite creatures can see how He does it or not. The Lord, the Jehovah, is not limited to the narrow conceptions of men, nor to their narrow theories and speculations for the channels of His operations. Men theorized many ages about the movements of the heavenly bodies before they understood their motion; but the Lord moved them on, not according to the theories of ignorant men, but according to the laws He had ordained. So He answers the prayers of the saints, not through the narrow channels prescribed in the theories of men, but according to His infinite wisdom and will. He can and will perform His work, whether we can understand how He will do it or not.

The great matter for us to understand is, *how to perform our part of the work.* We must know how to do this, or we can not do it. The view taken in this discourse opens the way for the Gospel, the Church, the preachers, private members, books, tracts, missionaries, school teachers—in one word, for human instrumentality, in every form—in making believers and turning the world to Christ, and views the sinner as an accountable being. The theory here opposed strikes out the Gospel, the Church, the preachers, private members, books, tracts, missionaries and school teachers—in one word, all human instrumentality in making believers and turning the world to Christ. This difference is wide enough—

so wide that the view here opposed strikes down the Gospel entirely, so far as converting men is concerned. The only reason why it has not done more harm is, that those who hold it, in spite of their theory, operate on the plan here advocated. Let us, then, preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which, from the beginning of the world, has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus the Christ.

ALLEGORY OF THE TWO WOMEN

By J. M. MATHES

Galatians iv:22-31.

TO understand this allegory, it will be necessary to make some general remarks upon the whole passage, and the context generally. And, first, the Galatia of the *New Testament* was one of the political divisions of Asia Minor, and perhaps the most important one. In this letter the apostle represents the Galatians, as all profane history does, as a people susceptible of quick impressions and very sudden changes, with a fickleness only equal to their courage and enthusiasm; and a constant liability to that disunion which was the result of their excessive vanity. They were a peculiar race, from whom had sprung one of the most powerful nations of modern times.

Long before the Christian era, they wandered forth from their European home, burnt Rome, pillaged Delphi, and founded an empire in Northern Italy, and another in Asia Minor, of great importance. The "Galatia" of the *New Testament* was really the "Gaul" of the east, and the Epistle to

the Galatians, would more literally be entitled, "the epistle to the Gauls." And when the Greek historians speak of the inhabitants of ancient France, they use the name "Galatians." The terms Gauls and Galatians are simply the Latin and Greek forms of the same barbarian appellation. When the Galatians were once established in Asia Minor, they lost no time in spreading themselves over the whole peninsula, with their arms and devastations. But their territory and power were gradually curtailed, and they were reduced to the central district, known in the times of Paul as Galatia, surrounded by the other states or provinces of Asia Minor. The modern French people are the descendants of these ancient Galatians, or Gauls.

Paul, on his second missionary tour from Antioch, in company with Silas and Timothy, having passed through Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, confirming the souls of the disciples, passed over into the "regions of Galatia." His reception there may be inferred from his letter to them, where he says, "And my temptation, which was in my flesh, you despised not, nor rejected, but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus." Chapter iv:14. These fickle-minded Galatians, were, however, soon seduced from the faith of the Gospel, after the departure of the apostle from among them, by time-serving teachers, who opposed and perverted the Gospel of Christ. The doctrine of these Judaizers, concerning the necessity of circumcision in order to salva-

tion, the apostle terms "another gospel," or rather no gospel at all.

In order to lessen the influence of Paul among the people, the Judaizers charged that he was no apostle, or at least that he was only an apostle of men, having received his commission to preach the Gospel, not from God, but from the brethren at Antioch; and that he had learned all he knew about the Gospel from the apostles at Jerusalem. These false accusations were listened to by many, which led the apostle to rebuke them sharply. He says, "O, foolish Galatians! who hath deceived you, that you should not obey the truth?"

And to refute these false charges, he narrates his journeys and labors after his conversion, and refers to his interviews with the other apostles, and then declares that he "did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before him," to learn the Gospel, but that he had received it by revelation from God the Father, and that he had successfully preached it for several years, before he saw any of the other apostles.

In the third chapter the apostle proves that the promise of God to Abraham, concerning Christ, was not disannulled or set aside by the law, which was established four hundred and thirty years after the promise. That the inheritance bestowed upon Abraham that he should be the heir of a world, was to be enjoyed through the fulfillment of the promise, and not by law, and consequently the Jewish nation did

not receive nor enjoy the promised inheritance by the law. The reasons that the promise or covenant made with Abraham could not be disannulled by any subsequent arrangement, God was one of the high contracting parties, and Abraham was the other, when the covenant was made concerning Christ. But when the law was given at Mount Sinai, Abraham was not present, and therefore, though it was but a man's covenant, yet, without his consent, no one could change it or set it aside. As Abraham was not present to give his consent, the covenant could not be disannulled by anything that was done at Mount Sinai.

The Judaizer would then very naturally ask the question, "Wherefore, then, serveth the law?" Of what account is the law, if it does not supersede the promise, nor put us in possession of the inheritance, which Paul declared was not enjoyed by the law, but by the promise? Paul answers, "It was added on account of transgression (till the offspring should come, to whom the promise was made), having been appointed through the service of the angels, in the hand of a Mediator." That is, the law was added to the promise four hundred and thirty years after the promise was confirmed to Abraham. Why was it added? "Because of transgression." How long shall it continue in force? "Until the seed, or offspring, shall come, to whom the promise was made." And he assures us that the seed or offspring to whom the promise was made, was Jesus Christ.

He then declares that the law could not give life, but that God has concluded all under sin; all under the law, as well as those who have not the law, so "that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ may be given to those who believe," whether Jew or Gentile. And he declares that, so far as the Jews were concerned, "the law was our pedagogue that led us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." But the Jew would ask, then, "Are we still under this pedagogue?" The apostle says, "But since faith has come (Christ the promised seed) we are no longer under a pedagogue."

The question would arise in the mind of the Jew, as it does in the mind of many sectarianized Gentiles: If the law could not give us life, or put us in possession of the inheritance; but merely act the part of a pedagogue to lead us to Christ, who you say has now come; then, who are the heirs of this valuable inheritance, which you teach that God gives, not by law, but through the Gospel? Are all the sons of Abraham made heirs unconditionally? The apostle answers:

"For ye are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus; for as many of you, as have been immersed into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither bondman nor freeman, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's children, and heirs according to the promise."

Neither all the Jews, nor all the Gentiles, are heirs of the inheritance with Abraham; but only such as have become the children of God by faith in Christ, and have put on Christ, by being immersed in His name. All such are heirs of the inheritance according to the promise made to Abraham. Believers, under the law, and others who had believed from the beginning, are represented by the apostle, at the beginning of the fourth chapter, as minors, under guardians and managers, till the time appointed by the Father. But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might buy off those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, "Abba, Father."

At the eighth verse, he speaks of the condition of the Gentiles: "But, then, because you knew not God, you were enslaved to those who, by nature, are not Gods; now, however, after having known God, rather, having been known by God, how is it that you are turning back to the weak and beggarly rudiments to which you desire again to be in bondage, as at first?" At the seventeenth verse, he refers to these Judaizing teachers, and their reasons for trying to lead these Galatians astray, he says: "They are ardently attached to you, but, not honorably; indeed, they desire to exclude us, that you may be ardently attached to them." Then, to illustrate and bring fully to view the condition of those still under

the bondage of the law, as contrasted with those made free by the Gospel, he introduces the allegory of the bondmaid, and the freewoman. We give the allegory, from Anderson's translation of the passage, as follows:

"Tell me, you that desire to be under the law, do you not understand the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons; one by a bondmaid, and one by a freewoman. But the one by the bondmaid was born according to the flesh; the other, by the freewoman, was by promise. These things are allegorized; for these women are the two covenants; the one from the Mount Sinai, that brings forth for bondage, which is Hagar. For Hagar represents Mount Sinai, in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem, which is above, is free; and she is the mother of us all. For it is written: Rejoice you barren, that do not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you that travail not; for many more are the children of the deserted, than of her that had the husband of the deserted. We, indeed, brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But, as then, he that was born according to the flesh, persecuted him that was born according to the spirit, so even now. But what says the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. Therefore, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the freewoman." Gal. iv:21-31.

As to the design of this allegory, or parable, we think there can be no doubt. But we shall discuss the main features of the allegory, very briefly, and in doing so, we shall speak of:

1. The bondmaid and her children,
2. The freewoman and her children,
3. The advantages of being children of the freewoman, as compared with the bondage of those who are born after the flesh—children of the bondmaid.

An allegory is, properly, when persons and events present, or near at hand, with their qualities and circumstances, being understood, are considered as types or representatives of persons and events more remote, to which they have a resemblance. "Wherefore, since the apostle Paul tells us, that what Moses has written concerning the two women, Sarah and Hagar, though a literal history of the two women, it is an allegorical representation of the two covenants; and that Abraham's sons by the women, represent the persons born under the two covenants, together with the treatment they are to receive from God; we can run no risk in so using the history. And especially as the prophet Isaiah gives the same representation of these women and their children, in the fifty-fourth chapter. He says, verse 1: "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear: For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife."

1. Hagar was the bondmaid of Sarah, the lawful wife of Abraham. But, as Sarah was barren, she

gave her Egyptian bondmaid to Abraham, that by her, as a kind of substitute, she might have children; and Hagar had a son by Father Abraham, and called his name Ishmael. And she was afterward cast out with her son, from heiring with Isaac the large estate of Abraham. Hagar, was also one of the names given to Mount Sinai, by the Arabians, as the name signifies in their language, a rock; it was very properly applied to the whole mountain range in Arabia Petrea, of which Mount Sinai is a part.

Hagar, being the name of Mount Sinai, where the Jewish nation received their law, and being a bondmaid, and bringing forth her son Ishmael to bondage, as the status of the child follows the condition of the mother; and as her son was not born according to the Spirit, but according to the flesh, that is, simply by ordinary generation, she is, therefore, with her son, a fit representation of the covenant given at Mount Sinai—which describes the condition of the present Jerusalem, which, like Hagar, is in bondage with her children.

The apostle certainly intends to teach us, that the Jews are the children of Hagar the bondmaid, because, like her son Ishmael, they were descended from Abraham according to the flesh, and like Ishmael, had no title to the inheritance by their fleshly descent from Abraham. The Israelites became members of the Jewish church, because they were descended from Abraham according to the flesh. They are not after the Spirit, but of the flesh; and being

born under the institution of the law, were not only in bondage, but not entitled to the inheritance, which is enjoyed entirely upon the ground of faith and obedience. All, therefore, who are members of the church by virtue of a natural birth, or fleshly relation, are the children of Hagar, and are in bondage, and not entitled to heir with the children of the freewoman.

2. The freewoman and her children represent the new covenant, and all those born under it. Sarah was the freewoman and Abraham's lawful wife. Yet she is called the *deserted* by the prophet; when Abraham took the Egyptian handmaid, by the advice and consent of his wife Sarah. Her son Isaac was born after the Spirit, as he was the child of promise. But Hagar and Ishmael persecuted Sarah and Isaac. So the present Jerusalem and her children persecute those who are born after the Spirit —the Christians.

But Sarah, the freewoman, who represents the Jerusalem which is above, is simply the Church of God under the new covenant. It is above, and all her children are free, as the child follows the condition of the mother. As to the multitude of the children of Sarah, the *deserted,* as compared to the children of Hagar, who had taken Sarah's husband, it is to be understood of Abraham's spiritual seed, the apostle says, Rom. ix:8: "The children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for seed." In the light the

expressions in Scripture, concerning believers being begotten of God and of the Spirit, are allusions to the supernatural begetting of Isaac, and to what was typified thereby. For example: "To as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, who were begotten, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John i:12. Again, "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God." John iii:5,6.

In Genesis xxi:9, we have an account of the persecution of Isaac by Ishmael, referred to in this allegory. It consisted in his mocking at the feast of his weaning. We are not specially informed as to what words he used in mocking and persecuting Isaac, but it is very probable that the following was about the true state of the case:

Ishmael was born in the year of the world 2094, and Isaac was not born till the year 2108, or fourteen years afterward. Ishmael and his mother Hagar, had, during that fourteen years, looked upon Ishmael as the sole heir to Abraham's vast estate; but when they saw the little stranger Isaac, the son of Sarah, they saw in a moment all their hopes dashed to the ground. He became envious and abusive of his younger brother. Finally, Sarah became so much displeased with Ishmael and his mother, that she prevailed upon Abraham to send them away, and he expelled them from his premises. Hagar and Ishmael wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba,

and when reduced to great distress and want, a voice from heaven said, "Fear not, Hagar, the Lord hath heard the child's voice. I will make him the father of a great people." They abode in the wilderness of Paran, where Ishmael became expert in archery, and his mother married him to an Egyptian woman.

Now, there is a striking resemblance in this; Ishmael, born after the flesh, was scornful, and hated his younger brother Isaac, who was born after the Spirit, and persecuted him, until he was expelled from the family of Abraham. So the Jews, who were born after the flesh, like Ishmael, persecuted the Christians. Like Ishmael, for a long time they looked upon themselves as the sole heirs to the kingdom of heaven, and the only children of Abraham; and when they saw the great Messiah, and especially when they saw his kingdom established on earth, and the people flocking to his standard, they were filled with bitter hatred and envy against Christ and his disciples, and persecuted them "even unto strange cities." They followed this wicked course until it became necessary that they be expelled from the land and ancient home of Abraham, like Hagar and Ishmael, their great prototypes. This was consummated when Jerusalem was taken by the Romans.

3. The advantages of being the children of the freewoman, as compared with the bondage of those who are born after the flesh—children of the bondmaid.

All Christians are children of the freewoman,

and of course are themselves free. The Savior says, "If you continue in my word, then you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Again —"And if the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed." To be made free by the Son, and through the truth, is to be pardoned, and adopted into the heavenly family, and constituted a child of Abraham, and an heir according to the promise. And Paul describes this conversion very beautifully in the following Scripture:

"For ye are the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus; for as many of you as have been immersed into Christ, have put on Christ. In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bondman nor freeman; there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you be Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. iii:26-29.

According to this testimony, then, no one is a child of Abraham, and heir according to the promise, except by faith in Christ, and obedience to the Gospel. The Gospel is the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," by which Paul declares we are "made free from the law of sin and death." None, then, belong to Abraham's spiritual family, but those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, with all the heart, repent of their sins and obey from the heart the form of doctrine delivered them, by being buried with the Lord in baptism—planted together in the likeness of His death. All such are born again—

born of water and of the Spirit, and according to the promise, as Isaac was. And then, all such are made free from sins, and children of the freewoman, or members of the church of the living God, which is the pillar and support of the truth.

But the Hagarines, are those who claim to be children of Sarah—or of Jerusalem—which is above, free, and the mother of all Christians, upon the ground of mere fleshly relations. This embraces a very large class of professors of religion of the present day, as well as of past ages. Take, for example, all the descendants of Abraham, according to the flesh who claim all the blessings promised to Abraham, by virtue of the fleshly relation. Wherever they are found, in all our great commercial centers, and marts of trade and business, they are the same haughty, persecuting people. Though like their prototype Ishmael, they have been cast out for nearly eighteen centuries, still they maintain all their ancient hatred to Christ and to His disciples—those born after the Spirit.

But we are laboring under a great mistake, if we suppose that the Israelites, according to the flesh, are the only children of Hagar we have among us. And we mean nothing meanly offensive, when we say that all national churches, as the Greek church of Russia, the Latin church of Rome—generally called the "Roman Catholic"—the church of England, over which crowned heads have long reigned, and all the pedobaptist churches in the old world and

in America, must be considered as represented by the bondmaid and her son. That we do them no injustice, all must admit, who have examined the subject with care. The great principle laid down here, not only by the Roman Catholics and the establishments of the old world, but in all pedobaptist churches in this country, is this: "The parents being members of the church, the child has a right to baptism and membership." Now, this is purely a fleshly relation, and is precisely such a condition as the apostle describes as "born after the flesh." All such are the children of Hagar, the bondmaid, "and shall not inherit with the children of the freewoman."

1. The first advantage we shall mention is, that being the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, and obedience to the Gospel, we know the Lord for ourselves. The prophet speaking of the new covenant, and the children of Sarah under it, says: "And it shall come to pass, that every man shall not teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'know the Lord,' for all shall know me from the least of them to the greatest of them." Jer. xxxi: 31-35. The very least and youngest of all the children of the freewoman, *know the Lord* for themselves, and have no need to be taught to know him by their brothers and fellow-citizens.

But this is not true of any Roman Catholic or any other pedobaptist church. Hundreds and thousands of very small children, and young infants,

are sprinkled and taken into the church, not because they have any faith in Christ, but solely on account of the fact that their parents, one or both, were members before them, and perhaps brought in upon this purely fleshly relation. Now, all such members have to be taught to know the Lord, as they grow up, and become capable of understanding and believing the truth. In a word, it can not be said of them: "And they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest of them," because a very large element in the membership do not know the Lord!

2. We notice, as a second advantage, that we are made free from sins.

All the children of the freewoman are made free from sin, by being pardoned. Jesus promised that, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved," that is, pardoned. And God promised, by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah: "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more for ever." And Peter said to the inquiring multitude: "Repent and be immersed every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts ii:37,38.

3. We receive the adoption, and become heirs of God, and joint heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ, our Master, is the owner and proprietor of the universe, and we are joint heirs with Him in this vast inheritance. Paul says: "All are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life

or death, things present or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." "But what saith the scriptures? Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman."

4. As a fourth advantage, we may mention the Holy Spirit. All the children of Sarah—Christians—enjoy the Holy Spirit. "Because you are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Again: "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." "We are his witnesses, and so also is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to all them that obey him." "If you have not the Spirit of Christ, you are none of his."

But the Holy Spirit, as a comforter and a witness, is only enjoyed by those who have become the children of God, by faith and obedience to Christ. And, of course, those whose title to spiritual blessings rests on the fleshly relation, recognized in all pedobaptist communities, has no promise of the Spirit, and consequently can not enjoy it.

5. A fifth advantage is, that we have the promise of a glorious resurrection from the dead, to immortality and eternal life. Paul says: "When this mortal shall have put on immortality, and when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility, then shall be brought to pass the saying, that Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death! where now thy sting! Grave, where now thy victory?" Again the

apostle says: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then, we who are alive and remain upon the earth, shall, together with them, be caught in the clouds into the air, to meet the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words." I Thess. iv:16-18.

But, perhaps, some one is ready to say, the Scriptures teach the doctrine of a general and universal resurrection of all the dead. Very true, my hearers, all the dead will be raised up, but "every one in his own proper band, or order." The Christian will have part in the first resurrection, and shall be raised in their own order; that is, with all Christians. But the sinner has made choice of his company here, and in that order or band, will he be raised up. And Jesus says: "The hour is coming, when all that are in the grave, shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, shall rise to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." John v:29.

6. A sixth advantage is, that being the children of the freewoman, we shall finally be permitted to enter in through the gates into the city of God above. "Happy are they who do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and shall enter in through the gates into the city." While upon the other hand, those who have no other title to heaven, but a flesh and blood relation, will

be without the city, among the unhappy throng, who have rejected the Gospel of Christ.

Then, in that city of delight, we shall join the happy throng, in giving praise to Him who has redeemed us by His blood, out of every nation, kindred, tongue and people, and made us unto our God kings and priests!

Then we shall enter upon the enjoyment of the rich inheritance of the saints in light. "But the bondwoman and her son, shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman." And Paul says: "For the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, to take vengeance on those who know not God, and who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." II Thess. i:6-10.

May the Lord enable us to be faithful until death, that we may at last receive the crown of life!

A PLEA FOR THE CHURCH OF GOD

By JOHN S. SWEENEY

THIS is an age of growth. It is astonishing, when one stops a moment to think about it, how much of that which makes our civilization better than barbarism has been brought in within the lifetime of many of our old men—well, within the last seventy-five or eighty years, we will say. It seems to us, in the light of our age, with everything whirring and buzzing about us, doing the world's business by the power of steam and electricity, a wonder that our ancestors were for centuries and even for thousands of years piddling along, doing almost nothing, barely scratching a meagre sustenance out of the earth, when all the while there was so much in it.

This is an age of schemes, of movements, of associations, of orders, of societies, all meant, of course, for the good of the people, for the betterment of society generally. Upon every good idea, and for reaching every good end, for the correction of every wrong and for the suppression of every great evil, we have already, or are likely to have in the near future, a special society organized, or

association formed, officered and equipped for that special work. It is amazing, when one gives a thought to it, how many societies—political, moral, benevolent and religious societies—have been conceived and brought into the world within the last half century, all intended to improve society and bless the world, and some of them to glorify God also.

In our churches, composed of their members, we have societies organized, with their pledges and constitutions and laws, until half the alphabet is used for the initials of their names; and the work of forming societies is still going on. A new one is brought forth nearly every day. We have societies or associations for the different sexes, for all ages, and for all conditions of men and women. If a young man wants Christian "association" for reading, rest or work, here is the Y. M. C. A. for him. If young Christians want to work for Christ, and are not certain they are capable of doing much, but are willing to endeavor, here is the Y. P. S. C. E. for them. If our Christian women wish to work especially in the good cause of temperance, here is the W. C. T. U. for them; and so on and so forth—a society or association for every good work and for the suppression of every great evil in the world.

What should be the attitude of the members of the church of God toward all these things? There are many people who decide this question very readily, some one way and some another. For my-

self, I have had some difficulty in deciding it to my own satisfaction.

Before going further in what I have to say about societies, specially religious societies, let me say a few words about the church, as to what I understand it to be, and to be for. The church of God, in its most comprehensive sense, includes all real believers in Jesus Christ, of all sexes, ages, colors, countries—and worlds. Of the church in this broad sense there is no organization further than that Christ is the head and all believers are members of his body. It has no offices. It is a union like that of the vine and its branches. The bond of union is faith in Jesus Christ.

But church in the *New Testament* has another sense, less comprehensive and more limited locally. In this sense the word is used in the plural—as "then had the churches rest," "the churches of Christ salute you," "all the churches of the Gentiles," "as in all churches of the saints," "the churches of God which are in Judea," etc. The churches in their local sense are composed of members of the church in the more comprehensive sense, in cities, towns and neighborhoods, associated together for the purposes of work, edification and enjoyment. This local association of disciples, with officers to oversee and serve them, is the only church organization—if I may use that word—known in the *New Testament.* Nor were these local churches associated together in any organic sense. They were

entirely independent of each other, further than that the members of all were spiritually united in the bonds of a common faith, hope and love. The ecclesiasticisms of our day are all younger than the church of God. Now, anyone who is a member of the church of God in its broadest sense, *needs* to belong to no other society, or association, or organization of a religious kind, in order to his usefulness and happiness in life, being thus furnished with all the means and instrumentalities for doing all the good he can do, and with all the association necessary for his edification and happiness. Such an one needs to do no more joining as to religious societies in order to his usefulness, happiness and salvation. I speak of the church member's *necessity* and *duty*, and not of his Christian *liberty*. Of that hereafter. As a member of the church he is thoroughly panoplied and furnished for the battle of life. The church furnishes all the society and all the means and instrumentalities he *needs*.

The question then arises, What should be the attitude of the members of the church of God toward all other religious associations and societies than the church? This question is not one to be hastily and inconsiderately answered. It is one of no little importance. Certainly Christians should not oppose or stand in the way of any good work being done by any person, or association of persons. They should carefully avoid the appearance of doing so. *Political* parties, even, advocate some good measures and do

some good things. This will not be denied. Christians should not be found opposing any good they are aiming to do.

The societies and orders of a moral and benevolent character, like the Masons, without exception, do some good, and Christians should be careful not to oppose them in their good work. And the many religious societies of our day, other than the church, are aiming to do good, and are doing some good beyond question. Christians should offer no resistance to any good work they are doing. Their methods may be in some respects objectionable, and they may do some things that might better not be done; still, Christians should be very careful to say nothing and do nothing that can be construed into opposition to the good they do. The disciples once saw a man casting out demons in the name of Jesus, and forbade him because he followed not with them, and when they reported it to their Master, He rebuked them, saying: "Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us." We should not forbid anyone working a good work because he does not follow with us.

In the second place: It is the Christian's liberty to show his approval of any good work, though not done by Christians, and though he cannot approve all the methods by which it was done. As a citizen of this Nation, the Christian has a right to vote—that is, the Christian *man*—and for myself I frequently exercise this right. When I see a political party

advocating a good thing, or opposing an evil one, I consider that party to that extent on my side, and allow it to vote with me. If a political party proposes to cast out a demon, so to speak, I shall certainly not forbid it. If a political party get on the right side of a moral question, it gets on our side. If it makes war upon any of the evils of the day, it fights on our side; and on all such questions we can fight together, though that party may do and advocate many things we do not like. The party that votes against slavery, the party that votes against polygamy, the party that votes against whiskey, the party that votes against lotteries and pools, is to that extent on our side, and we can vote together, though we do not *belong* to any political party, nor the party belong to the church.

We belong to the army of the Lord, enlisted, pledged, initiated, sworn in, to fight for life or during the war against all evil and for all good; but we should not despise any assistance from those who may choose to fight the evils we are fighting, simply because they do not belong to the regular army. Let them fight on our side if they wish to. They are helping us. We are pledged to our Leader. We belong to His army—the church. We are soldiers under him, the great Prince of our salvation. We are panoplied with the whole armor of God. The weapons of our warfare, as Christians, are not carnal, but mighty through God for the pulling down of the strongholds of sin in every shape and form. We

are contending for more than any of the political parties, or any of the moral, benevolent or religious societies. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," for these we contend.

We are fighting against sin and evil all along the line. Any person or party fighting for any particular good thing or against any particular evil is helping us. True, we are not enlisted under their banner, and are not subject to their orders, are not marching and fighting under their command. They are helping us, and we should approve and rejoice in any good they do, in any help they may lend us. We can go together just so long and so far as they go *our way.* We can fight together while they fight in any part of our battles.

We cannot afford to do anything that in any sense or any measure disparages or minimizes the church of God, and thereby dishonors our Leader. We should not expressly or by implication concede that the church of God is in any sense or measure insufficient, or that her divinely appointed means and instrumentalities are in any measure insufficient, for the purposes of their appointment. We should stand for the supreme authority of Christ. We are complete in Him, who is over all principalities and powers, in heaven or on earth. We cannot be too careful here. We should stand for the church as

God's appointment for the conversion and salvation of the world; as God's appointed and equipped army for the conquest of the world. With others than Christians we should fight only when they fight on our side—fight our battles. We should company with them only when they go our way.

I confess I look with some distrust and fearful apprehensions upon the growing number of associations and societies in the churches. Must we have a Christian Association for young men? What is the church of God? What is it for? Is it not for Christian association? Is it not a sufficient association for Christians? That is, I mean, is it not a sufficient *Christian* Association? But we are told we must have a Christian Association especially and exclusively for young men. I don't know but young men might better associate with older ones, and all of them associate with women, as in the church of God. And we must have a Christian Association for young women exclusively, we are told. Then we must have Endeavor Societies for young people. But, I ask, is not the church an Endeavor Society? Is not that one of the objects of its existence in the world? If we are to organize and sustain a society for every special Christian work, and for every sex and age, what will become of the church? Who will be left in the church? Only a few very old men and women, too old to work, or to associate, or even to endeavor, to die off in. Will it not become an old, useless, fallen-down, outside fence? Or, to speak of

it as a plant—and it is a plant planted by the Lord —will not the societies suck the life out of it? I sucker my plants—that is, I pull the suckers off.

I insist that it is not right for Christians to give their time and strength to the societies and neglect the church of God. These societies were not planted by our Lord, nor by His apostles. Think of the apostle Paul going from city to city organizing Y. P. S. C. E.'s, or Y. M. C. A.'s! Paul did no such work, nor did any other apostle.

Now, please do not misunderstand me as opposing any good work done by any of these societies. I rejoice in every good work that is done in the world. But what I mean is, that Christians do not need to spend their time and means organizing and fostering such societies. The church of God is a spiritual house enough for us to live in, temple enough for us to worship in, vineyard enough for us to work in, husbandry enough for us to tend, building enough for us to work on, army enough for us to march, drill and fight in. People who are contending, as they say, for primitive Christianity, for *New Testament Christianity,* should stand for the church of the *New Testament,* and leave others to spend their time on human societies, if they cannot be persuaded to do better.

Where we go into and foster these religious societies, with their pledges and constitutions, we do it in the teeth of our fathers who proposed to return to the Christianity and the church of the *New Testa-*

ment, and by our action endorse the creed principle, and thus condemn ourselves in the thing which we allow. Instead of strengthening the young people among us in opposition to creeds and parties, and in their *faith* in the all-sufficiency of the *New Testament* as the rule of faith and practice for the people of God, we are breaking down in their estimation that for which we and our fathers have contended and tried to build up. We are educating our children for sectarianism.

Preachers of the restoration, who are, or who profess to be, contending for primitive Christianity, for that pure Christianity and church of the *New Testament,* will find, when it is too late perhaps, that when they are going over the country organizing Christian Associations and Christian Endeavors, and teaching our young people how necessary they are, they are pulling down that which our fathers labored to build up, and which they may think they are building up.

To repeat what I have said:

1. Members of the church of God should be careful to oppose no good work being done either by individuals or societies. Every good work is in the line of our work, and will be a help. While we are not able to approve all the methods of outside individuals or societies, we should not put ourselves in any such attitude as can fairly be construed into opposition to any good work. Let anybody cast out demons. Let anybody fight the evils of

the day. Let anybody do good without opposition from us.

2. Church members can show their sympathy with and approval of every good work. We as citizens vote with such parties as are advocating good measures without belonging to such parties or endorsing all their methods. We can, under our own banner, fight with all who are fighting against evil. We can go with and co-operate with all who are going our way and working our work.

3. We cannot afford to say or do anything that implies even the necessity, so far as we are concerned, of any organization or society of a religious character other than the church of God. It is enough for us. It is all we need. We are complete in Jesus Christ and His church. We should stand in and for the church. We should work in and by the church. We should honor the Head of the church. We should not go out to work, but work in the church. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the purpose of the ages which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Only thus can we heed the teaching of the apostle, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

For my own part, while I rejoice in all the good I see accomplished by the many religious parties and

associations and societies, I have settled the question that the church of God is religious society enough for me; I organize no other Christian Associations for young or old, male or female. I have no time or energy to spend building up any other Christian endeavor societies.

"I love Thy church, O God,
Her walls before Thee stand,
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,
And graven on Thy hand.
For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend,
To her my care and toils be given,
'Till toils and cares shall end."

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE

By W. T. MOORE, M.A., LL.D.

THE future is hope's paradise. Within its beautiful realm is to be found the antidote for all our political, social and religious disorders. It is, to most of us, a world of untold delights and infinite possibilities. In short, it is the "home, sweet home" of that "good time coming" of which we have all been dreaming, and concerning which we have so often been disappointed.

And yet this future is practically an unexplored land. Really we know nothing about it. It is true we are always in sight of it, but have never actually entered it; for, like the mirage of the desert, it changes its position the moment we change ours. It lies just beyond the narrow strait which we call the present, and which separates us from the ever-receding past. We are constantly sailing along the shores of this enchanting paradise, and yet we are never permitted to press our feet upon its untrodden soil. We often strain our aching eyes to catch some clear gleam from the mountain peaks to which hope impels us to look; but, alas! the light of the future land does not suit our eyes, and consequently when we

open the door of our souls for some sweet vision, like the dreamer in Poe's *Raven,* we see "darkness there and nothing more."

Nevertheless, it is still true that we are saved by hope; saved from the despondency which would inevitably overwhelm us if shut up wholly to recollections of the past and perplexities of the present. And especially would this be the case when considering religious matters. The past is full of disappointments as regards everything, and in nothing is this disappointment more distinctly realized than in the achievements of the post Apostolic Church. At any rate, I think it is impossible for any intelligent, honest student of church history to be satisfied with what the historic church has accomplished. Undoubtedly a great deal has been done, and no one is more ready to acknowledge this than I am; and yet it is simply impossible to accept with entire satisfaction the facts of our religious development. Whatever may be the excuses offered, it is nevertheless certainly true that the success of the church in the past has not been commensurate with the vast energies and means which have constantly been placed under contribution.

I do not now stop to account for this failure, though much could be said in explanation of it without charging anyone with wilful departure from *New Testament* teaching, or want of earnestness in doing the work of the Lord. However, in view of what the past actually has been, it is not surprising

that many are turning their faces to the future and anxiously looking for the realization of the church which has so far existed in the world only as an ideal.

And it now falls to my lot to make an honest effort to formulate a church of the future that will bring the real and ideal church into practical unity, and thus present to the world the conception of the church which is found in the *New Testament Scriptures,* and which will at the same time satisfy the ardent hopes of those who have waited long and patiently for the realization of the prophetic vision which the apocalyptic seer so vividly sketches in the last two chapters of the *Book of Revelation.*

And it will help us just here to a better understanding of the whole question if I indicate in a comprehensive generalization the main standpoints from which the church must be viewed when considered with respect to its whole history.

1. The first and most important of these standpoints is that which reveals to us the Divine ideal of the church. This ideal can only be found in the *New Testament,* where the Holy Spirit describes the church as "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," being "holy and without blemish." But surely no such church as this has ever yet been realized in human experience. Not even in Apostolic times did the church fully reach this splendid ideal. And the reason for it is not far to seek. The ideal represents the Divine perfection, but the real or his-

toric church has always been more or less affected by human weakness. The first is what God would have the church to be; the second is what it has always been, in view of the fact that the church in history simply illustrates the struggles of human weakness to reach the perfection of the Divine.

2. The fact just stated makes it necessary for us to distinguish sharply between the church described in the New Testament and the church as it has existed in human history. The latter is practically in many respects a different church from the former, and this difference is at many points so decided that we are justified in speaking of the historic church as practically a distinct and separate organization from the church described in the *New Testament.* And yet there are many points of identity between the two, and this fact leads me to suggest that the church of history must be reckoned with in any honest effort to deal with the characteristics of the church of the future. In fact, it may be well to take an honest look at the church of the present day before attempting to indicate what the church of the future will be.

3. This brings me to consider a most important factor in connection with the law of development. It must never be forgotten that the church of the present day is the product of a number of complex and often conflicting forces. It is really the result of a compound, the parts of which are not always easily detected by even the most trustworthy tests.

However, there are a few elements entering into the compound which cannot be mistaken by anyone who is at all acquainted with ecclesiastical chemistry. Among these elements must be mentioned, first and most important, the Divine ideal of the church as it is given in the Word of God. But this ideal has been filtered through the solution of human weakness, and has certainly been brought into contact with an environment tainted not only with weakness, but also with sin, and the consequence has been precisely what every reasonable person could readily anticipate—namely, a church closely allied to the Divine principle and aim, but very far from the Divine in character and work. And just here we are lifted to a high promontory, from which we can survey the whole field of religious controversy, and at the same time find the solution of many problems which would otherwise be perplexing.

A distinguished French writer has truly said that "Every religion has two factors, God and man, in other words, the truth, and the human mind, which, more or less perfectly, grasps the truth. When any religion claims to have only God for Father, and to reach us without any passing through minds like our own, it labors under a mere illusion; this is not a mystery to be sure, but a chimera." And it is precisely this fact which is most frequently overlooked by many who study the Christian religion. They either reckon with God only, or man only; but, to do justice to every question involved,

they should reckon with both God and man. It is not enough to determine even definitely what is the truth in any given case, but we must also determine what that truth will be when it passes into human experience. It is one thing to consider truth in the abstract, and it is quite another to consider it in human life. In the first case, it may be very beautiful to look at. We may even lock it up in some place where it will be secure from the contaminating influences of human struggle; but when truth is thus considered it is really of no practical importance. We must look at it as it shows itself in human history. Hence the intelligent and conscientious student of the Christian religion must not fail to note carefully the difference between the Divine ideal of the church as described in the *New Testament Scriptures,* and the human real church as it is shown in the history of the ages since the day of Pentecost.

And from this point of view it is easy to see that in indicating what the future will be, we must take into consideration the two factors to which reference has been made. Both God and man must be reckoned with, and when this is intelligently and honestly done, we shall undoubtedly realize a church modelled after the pattern given us in the *New Testament* as regards faith, organization and life, but nevertheless considerably modified by the human element, which must always assert itself as long as sin and weakness are incidental to our present invironment.

And now, with these clearly defined and im-

portant preliminary conclusions before us, I think we are prepared to look somewhat in detail as to what the church of the future will be in its faith, organization and life.

1. *What Will Its Faith Be?* Undoubtedly it will believe something. It was always true, is true now, and will be true in the future, that "without faith it is impossible to please God." I know it is just now a growing fashion to treat faith indifferently—as if it were possible to know anything until we first believe! The fact is, faith is absolutely primary and fundamental in all our actions. The Apostle Paul said what is perfectly true to human experience when he declared that "we walk by faith and not by sight." The great Anselm said: "I believe in order that I may know; I do not know in order that I may believe." And this is precisely in harmony with the experience of all who look at the matter from either a Scriptural or philosophical point of view.

But the church of the future will not only believe something, but that something will have a definite reality. There is a good deal of what is called faith which has nothing definite upon which to rest. It is belief in something, but that something is not unlike the woman's singing of the stanza in which both Canaan and Jordan are mentioned. She could not remember these names, and consequently she sang it after the following fashion:

"So to the Jews old something stood,
While something rolled between."

It is perhaps true that in the past too much has been made of nice philosophical distinctions and recondite theological definitions but this, in my judgment, does not justify a reaction to the extreme of latitudinarianism. I am not unconscious of the fact that one extreme begets another, but surely one extreme does not justify another. The old tendency to dogmatize as to matters of faith, to believe in opinions rather than facts, and to formulate speculations about the truth rather than to accept heartily the truth itself, has no doubt produced untold evils, and among these evils may be fairly reckoned the present tendency to be all things to all men, that by all means we may be nothing. There is really just as much need in these days of definiteness as regards matters of faith as at any time during the history of the church.

But this definite something in the church of the future will have infallibility. We are so constituted that we cannot find perfect rest in anything short of that which is infallibly certain. Archimedes said that if he had a fulcrum for his lever he could lift the world from its center. This suggests the need of hermeneutics as well as philosophy. We cannot make progress without a definite starting point, and as regards religion this starting point must have infallibility. There is really nothing so certain as certainty. The French have a proverb which in our language says: "He who hesitates is lost." But we are sure to hesitate in religious matters if we do

not accept our Supreme Guide as absolutely infallible. The great French philosopher, M. Cousin, in his lectures on "The True, the Beautiful and the Good," says:

"To-day, as in all time, two great wants are felt by man. The first, the most imperious, is that of fixed, immutable principles, which depend upon neither times nor places nor circumstances, and on which the mind reposes with an unbounded confidence. In all investigations, as long as we have seized only isolated, disconnected facts, as long as we have referred them to a general law, we possess the materials of science, but there is yet no science. Even physics commence only when universal truths appear, to which all facts of the same order that observation discovers to us in nature may be referred."

Plato has said: "There is no science of the transitory." This is our first need. But there is another, not less legitimate, the need of not being the dupe of chimerical principles, of barren abstractions, of combinations more or less ingenious, but artificial; the need of resting upon reality and life, the need of experience. The physical and natural sciences, whose regular and rapid conquests strike and dazzle the most ignorant, owe their progress to the experimental method, which is carried to such an extent that one would not now condescend to lend the least attention to a science over which this method should not seek to preside.

The first part of this statement distinctly emphasizes the point I have just made with respect to the need for infallibility, while the second leads me to expand my statement with regard to what the church of the future will believe. The definite something which will be the object of faith will not only have infallibility, but will also have personality. Whoever has carefully looked into the history of the rise and progress of theology can scarcely have failed to notice that the whole of what is called theological science is based upon deductions from concepts of relations which have been improperly translated into things. It is truthfully said in Lewis' "History of Philosophy" that "one of the infirmities of thought is to transmute the former into material elements, to raise relations out of their proper category and transport them into the category of things. This is the parent of metaphysics. It is often called the tendency to realize abstractions. Having combined certain elements of practical experiences into a single conception, we treat the concept as if it were an individual object." Nothing could be more destructive of practical religion than this tendency to realize abstractions in the matters with which religion has to do.

But we do not stop even here in our metaphysical gymnastics. If the tendency to which I have called attention were allowed to have free course, as a mere exercise of the mind, the evil would not be so great, for undoubtedly metaphysical studies have a

tendency to help the mind in making accurate distinctions, but these metaphysical conceptions or abstractions as soon as they are changed into things become in our estimation tests of fellowship, and consequently our reasonings instead of our actions are made to mark the bounds of Christian unity. We go deliberately to work to make out a given case; we apply the rules of logic until the Aristotelian system trembles under the heavy weight laid upon it, and then, when we have reached a conclusion, we do not hesitate to elevate this conclusion into all the force of a "Thus-saith-the Lord." This is precisely what is objectionable. Logic is not a thing to be feared so long as it is confined to its legitimate sphere, but when we undertake to substitute the deductions of human reason for the plain statements of the Word of God, then it is that knowledge usurps the authority of faith, and human creeds become the bonds of religious union and communion; then it is that the Bible ceases to be a rule of faith and duty, and becomes a mere fighting-ground for theological pugilists.

Several years ago Archbishop Whately called very earnest attention to the folly of making theological speculations fundamental, or even important, in our religious faith, and Mansel, in his "Limits of Religious Thought," has put the whole matter so clearly that I feel justified in quoting a few sentences from his masterly statement. He says: "The testimony of Scripture, like that of our natural

faculties, is plain and intelligible when we are content to accept it as a fact intended for our practical guidance; it becomes incomprehensible only when we attempt to explain it as a theory capable of speculative analysis. We are distinctly told that there is mutual relation between God and man as distinct agents; that God influences man by His grace, visits him with reward or punishment, regards him with love or anger; that man within his own limited sphere is likewise capable of 'prevailing with God' that his prayer may obtain an answer from Him, his conduct call down God's favor of condemnation.

"There is nothing self-contradictory or even unintelligible in this if we are content to believe that it is so, without striving to understand how it is so; but the instant we attempt to analyze the ideas of God as infinite and man's as finite—to resolve the Scriptural statements into the higher principles on which their possibility apparently depends—we are surrounded on every side by contradictions of our own raising, and, unable to comprehend how the Infinite and finite can exist in mutual relation, we are tempted to deny the fact of that relation altogether, and to seek refuge, though it be but insecure and momentary, in pantheism, which denies the existence of the finite; or atheism, which rejects the Infinite."

This very clear and forcible statement enables us to see how surely we run upon breakers if we attempt to steer our religious life by a purely theo-

logical chart. It is well therefore that we are beginning to understand this matter, and, as a consequence, are beginning to seek for practical channels through which to display our energies, instead of in theological hair-splitting, which serves only to confuse thought rather than clarify it, to hinder Christian unity rather than foster it.

Certainly no one ought to conclude from the present tendency that right thinking is of no consequence. I do not for a moment anticipate that the tendency to the practical will do away with even formulated thinking. As long as men ask the reason why things are so there will undoubtedly be attempts to answer, and no one should object to all legitimate efforts to solve every question which can possibly be suggested as regards both the life that now is and that which is to come, provided always that the inquiry is conducted in a legitimate manner. And when once we have abandoned the dogmatic method of investigation as regards the faith of the Gospel, it will not be difficult for us to reach the conclusion that faith is simply personal and not doctrinal at all. It is belief in a great Person, as our Prophet, Priest and King, and not in some metaphysical abstractions concerning either Him or anything He has spoken. This at once lifts faith out of the region of abstraction and places it where it properly belongs.

The last point to be considered with respect to faith is that Christ, as the object of faith, inspires perfect confidence, not only because of His infalli-

bility as a teacher, but also because of His perfect character in every other respect. We need only to understand Him in order to be able to trust Him implicitly, and this implicit trust brings with it perfect peace. I do not say that we will always completely trust Him, even though, like Pilate, we are compelled to acknowledge that we find no fault in Him. I have already intimated that there are two factors in Christianity, namely, the Divine and the human. One is perfect, the other imperfect. And while this remains true I do not see how it is possible to expect any condition of things wherein there will be no place for doubt and uncertainty. The human will always be more or less uncertain in its grasp of the Divine, although it may be perfectly certain that the latter has every characteristic on which the soul can repose with entire confidence. However, it will surely help us to rest securely in the object of our faith, when that object is something definite, and when this something definite has infallibility, and when this infallibility has personality, and when this personality is entirely worthy of our most implicit trust.

And this brings me to say a word or two about the difference between Christ Himself and that system of religion which bears His name. Christ is greater than Christianity. This fact contains the hope of the world. Christianity, as the historical evolution, has doubtless been useful in many respects, but has also been destructive of some of the best in-

terests of mankind. It should be remembered that the word "Christianity" is not in the Bible, and is, therefore, of human origin. Nevertheless, when it represents the teaching and practice of Christ and His apostles, it has its proper place in the nomenclature of religious literature. But, unfortunately, in its modern use it very frequently stands for systems of doctrines presented in human creeds, while in its practical aspects it stands for the divided state of what is called Christendom, as well as the dogmatic strife which has more frequently in the history of the church represented the spirit of anti-Christ than the spirit of Christ Himself. Indeed, it may be truly said that every century since the days of the apostles has had its confederacy of evil in the garb of Christianity. I have already intimated the danger of theological speculation in religious matters, and therefore I need not take up your time with details as to how this danger has been illustrated in the history of past centuries. It is quite sufficient to say that there can be little hope for any church of the future which does not make the personal Christ the beginning and end of a whole-hearted faith.

2. *What Will Be the Organization of the Future Church.* Before looking at the question of organization specifically, it may be well to say a few words about it generally. Undoubtedly the historic church has been heavily burdened by an alliance with the governments of this world. But this is not the worst

of it. The union of church and state necessarily implies limitations which are not in harmony with the character of the church as described in the *New Testament*. The Divine ideal of the church may always and everywhere be known by at least three distinguishing characteristics:

First, universality; second, spirituality; and third by unity.

And if the church of the future is to manifest the essential features of the Divine ideal, or *New Testament* church, then clearly the coming church cannot be bounded by state lines, or associated with statecraft, or divided into as many parts as there are different governments in the world. Whatever else the church of the future may lack, it must have comprehension; it must have a spiritual membership; and it must have distinct oneness in all that is necessary to constitute Christian unity. The very message which it has to deliver to the world is universal in its character, and consequently the church itself cannot be restricted by the boundary lines of earthly kingdoms or temporalities of any kind whatever. In a word, it must be ecumenical. The Gospel is to be carried into all the world and preached to every creature, and the church ought to be co-extensive with the Gospel message. It is also true that membership in the church of the future must depend upon spiritual birth, and not upon natural birth.

In other words, nationality must not be allowed to take the place of spirituality. Because a man is a

citizen of a certain government or belongs to a particular nationality, he must not on that account be regarded as necessarily belonging to the church of Jesus Christ. Nothing short of the new birth, or new creation in Christ Jesus, will entitle anyone to real membership in the organization I am considering. And let it be furthermore distinctly understood that the present divided state of Christendom utterly fails to represent the oneness of Christ's disciples for which He so fervently prayed. Hence the church of the future must have catholicity, spirituality and unity. And to have these it must not consider seriously the question of what is called the "historic episcopate," or any other peculiar feature of church government which radically affects the three general characteristics to which I have called attention.

Nor is there any need for cleavage along the lines which have usually distinguished Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Congregationalists from each other. The church of the future will undoubtedly be Episcopalian, because it will be governed by bishops or overseers; it will be Presbyterian because it will be governed by presbyters or elders, these being from a *New Testament* point of view the same as bishops or overseers; and it will also be Congregational, because the whole assembly will be the final source of appeal with respect to all matters of governmental authority. Hence the church will be Episcopalian, Presbyterian and Congregational, but

not any one of these to the exclusion of the others.

It is desirable I think that special emphasis should be placed upon the last general characteristic which I have mentioned, namely, the oneness of the members of the church of the future. This oneness is very comprehensively and clearly stated by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians, where he says: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for we are all one in Christ Jesus."

In this Scripture there are three very important distinctions clearly indicated, which I think the church of the future must practically annihilate before it is possible for that church to realize, even in an approximate sense, the splendid ideal of the *New Testament*. Let us therefore look honestly at these three distinctions to which the Apostle calls attention.

1. The distinction between Jew and Greek cannot be recognized in the future church. This has been one of the fundamental difficulties in the way of the progress of the Gospel ever since it was first preached, and it has perhaps done more than any other one thing to destroy the ecumenical character of the church. Indeed, it cannot be doubted that even now the old controversy between Jew and Greek, between the old covenant and the new, between the law and the Gospel, between Moses and Christ, is more or less a factor in the church of the

present day. It is not too much to say, I verily believe, that we are still troubled with Judaizing teachers, who are urging all God's free children to go back again to the yoke of bondage. But those who are so zealous for the law practically destroy the Gospel. We must not bind freedom in order to liberate the slave. In our anxiety to honor the law of Moses we may dishonor the law of Christ.

Too much emphasis placed upon the first may make the last an insignificant appendix, and this is precisely what many have practically done during the past ages of the church, and I fear that there are not a few who are even now more careful about maintaining the integrity of the law than the integrity of the Gospel. Undoubtedly the law is better than nothing at all. And it may be that some people will have to tie themselves to it, like Ulysses tied himself to the masts of the ship in order to pass securely the Island of the Sirens; but if we really know how to make the music of the new covenant we may, like Orpheus, drown the voice of the sirens in the sweet melody of the Gospel lute, and thus escape the seductive influence of temptation without the necessity of fastening ourselves to the imperious prohibitions of the law. And it is simply certain that the church of the future must take a new departure with respect to the matter now under consideration. And it will, I think, at any rate demonstrate the unity of the race by breaking down the distinction between Jew and Greek.

The promise of God to Abraham was in its ultimate design emphatically ecumenical—it included all the families of the earth. And the law which was given 430 years afterwards was simply a parenthesis, or a mere temporary addition, because of transgressions until the promised seed should come. This law could not therefore annul the promise which was intended for all time and for every creature. The former was not only temporal, but temporary. It related not only to time simply in its dealings with the Jewish people, but even the time of its authority was limited. It was also exclusive. The latter however is inclusive, comprehensive, spiritual and permanent. As the law has dominion only while the man liveth, the moment we are crucified with Christ, or die to sin, that moment are we released from the law. Our resurrection is to a new life, to a new Master, and to a new kingdom. In fact, all things become new to us the moment we are in Christ Jesus our lord, and in Him the law hath no dominion over us. Or, to change the figure, the law is a shadow of the good things to come. Now a shadow presupposes light somewhere. The light of the Sun of Righteousness was actually shining at the time the law was in force, and as this Sun rose higher and higher the shadow grew shorter and shorter; so that when, on the day of Pentecost, the Sun had reached the zenith of His glory, was indeed declared to be both Lord and Christ, then the shadow was under His feet, or the law ceased to have any potentiality with either

Christ or those who were His. Since that time "Christ has been the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." This fact must be made prominent in the church of the future, or else that church will not be much of an improvement on the church of the past or the present.

And the influence of the Greek as such must be broken. The late Professor Hatch, of Oxford University, with great research and ability, has shown with admirable clearness the influence of Greek philosophy on the development of historic Christianity. No doubt we are largely indebted to the Greek spirit for the philosophizing tendency to which I have already called attention, and which has wrought such fearful havoc in the historic church, for it cannot be doubted that the tendency has been the parent of most of the theological hair-splitting which has often made the difference between saints and sinners to consist in little more than the charge of a single letter in the spelling of a word.

However, the annihilation of the difference between Jew and Greek will at once demonstrate the unity of the race, which is a most important step in the direction of that universal brotherhood, the establishment of which is one of the great objects of Christianity in the world.

2. The distinction between bond and free must also give way before the coming church. The breaking down of this distinction will bring us to social unity. There is perhaps nothing in which the church

of the past has more signally failed than in realizing the Christian ideal of social life. The late General Gordon was practically divorced from the churches of his day by what he regarded as this recognition of caste. He held very earnestly to the notion that both Christ and His apostles very clearly taught that in Christ Jesus the distinction between bond and free cannot legitimately be recognized. And I think we are all bound to acknowledge that even our modern Christianity does not properly illustrate the socialism of the *New Testament.* The old notion that one man is better than another because of the accident of natural birth still dominates our church life, and I fear has a much deeper hold than many are willing to admit. But the church of the future will break down the reign of caste, and will recognize only the royal mark of dignity which belongs to every Christian man, because of his relation to the Man Christ Jesus. The fact is there is nothing which distinguishes the Christian religion so much as its doctrine of social unity.

When Christ said "There is joy in heaven with the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," He struck the keynote of the music of the new age to which we are rapidly coming. The value of the individual man, and the value of the man in his lowest estate, is perhaps the most marvelous revelation in the whole teaching of the great Teacher. We pray that the will of God may be done on earth as in heaven, but how few of us are ready to rejoice

over one sinner that repenteth! When, however, such a person returns to God, all heaven is filled with rapturous delight. But we wait for the hundreds and thousands before our joy amounts to much. And even these must be the distinguished of earth in order to excite our highest delight. But I thank God the church of the future will change all this, for it will completely revolutionize our social ideas and will consequently break down all such barriers as have heretofore blocked the way to genuine religious progress. Flesh will not longer dominate, though it may not be completely conquered while we are subject to the conditions of our present environment. Doubtless we shall always be to some extent influenced by the sensuous while we are in our present state, but when the spiritual man has fair play in the struggle for the mastery, we shall at least be delivered from the complete domination of the sensuous, which has so emphatically marked the past history of the church.

3. It is perhaps even more remarkable that the Apostle should say that there is neither male nor female in Christ Jesus. And yet there is a most important sense in which this is true, and if the church of the future is to maintain the essential characteristics of the unity contended for by the Apostle, then it is certain that woman must have a more important place in the church than she has yet filled. I do not stop to discuss these recondite questions which so often have engaged the attention of theologi-

cal pugilists—such as Paul's supposed prohibition against women speaking in church, etc. I am concerned at present with a more important aspect of the question. I am looking at a phase of family life which must be made prominent in the church.

I have already shown that by getting rid of the anti-spiritual difference between Jew and Greek we practically reach the unity of the race, and by getting rid of the distinction between bond and free we reach the unity of society; or social unity; and now I wish to emphasize the fact that by getting rid of the distinction between male and female, in so far as church relations are concerned, we shall reach family unity; and this will practically cover the whole ground of unity so far as it relates to organization. Indeed, I believe the church of the future will have organic unity simply because it will recognize organic difference. Unity implies difference. There is difference between Jew and Greek, there is also difference between bond and free, there is difference between male and female; but in Christ Jesus these differences do not count. The oneness that is in Him brings all differences into unity. He is the light of the world in which all colors are blended; He is the music of the world in which all different notes harmonize. And when the church shall cease listening to organ-grinders, and hear only Him of whom Moses and the Prophets did speak, then we shall begin to understand that difference in the right place is harmony, while difference in the wrong place

is discord. But, as already intimated, we have been listening to organ-grinders whose sectarian clatter is not much more grateful to the cultivated ear than those of whom Dr. Holmes speaks:

> "You think they are crusaders sent
> From some infernal clime,
> To pluck the eyes of sentiment,
> And dock the tail of rhyme,
> To crack the voice of melody,
> And break the legs of time."

And it cannot be disputed that the discords of hurdy-gurdy sectarianism have been heard all along the line traced by the apostle in the words which we have been considering, and especially with respect to what he says about male and female.

I cannot now go into particulars in order to show how woman's work may be made more effective in the salvation of the world. It is sufficient for my present purpose to put all the emphasis I can command into the inspired statement which I have quoted from the Apostle to the Gentiles. And, in my judgment, when we have practically reached the three unities to which I have called attention, there will not be much difficulty in realizing "the unity of the spirit" which the Divine Word so urgently exhorts us to keep. This, of course, is the main end in view, but the three unities which the Apostle's teaching clearly implies must necessarily precede such a unity of the spirit as will give us a church

commensurate with the needs of the whole human race.

Undoubtedly our conflict is chiefly with the three antagonisms which the Apostle has presented, and consequently to overcome at these points will be to subdue the flesh, conquer the animal, and bring liberty to the spiritual man. At present our struggle is with the sensuous, the carnal, the animal, involving all the lower elements of our being and environment, and we can have spiritual unity only when our higher nature has gained the ascendancy over the lower, and when our true manhood and womanhood are allowed to become dominant in our life-work. . . .

3. Having now considered with sufficient fullness what will be the faith and organic character of the church of the future, it is only necessary in order to complete our survey to notice briefly *what this church will be in its life; or what it will be as a practical organization for good.* This, after all, is the true test of everything that has life, and this is really the side of what we call Christianity that Christ Himself most distinctly emphasized. He certainly did not give much attention to what we call doctrinal statements. Indeed it may be fairly questioned whether he gave any attention whatever to the kind of doctrinal statement which has largely engaged the attention of the church in the past. It is at any rate a very remarkable fact that all the creeds of Christendom are chiefly concerned with

dogmas which have little or no place in the teaching of the Christ, while the matters which He emphasized most are either not noticed at all, or else they are placed in a very subordinate position. It would truly be a very curious creed that would emphasize the teaching, item by item, of the Sermon on the Mount; and yet it seems to me that that teaching is quite as important as anything else in the *New Testament*, if indeed it is not more important. But, however this may be, it is safe to say that whatever may have been necessary to the church of the past, or whatever it may have been able to do without, it is absolutely certain that the church of the future can never meet the high hopes of the present nor the responsibilities of the work which that church will be called upon to discharge, unless it practices what it preaches. Hence both its faith and organization will be useless, and even worse than useless, if the life of the church is not what it ought to be. . . .

What, then, will be the character of the coming church with respect to the great work which it has to accomplish? It will be (A) aggressive; (B) progressive; (C) congressive.

Let us very briefly examine each one of these in the order I have named them, and then we shall, I think, the better understand the real spirit of the church which we are all hoping may soon come in its fullest manifestations of power.

1. The church of the future will be intensely ag-

gressive. It will not be satisfied to merely build places of worship and then invite the people into them, or else by pandering to worldly taste entice the people into them; but the church I am considering will recognize in all its potentiality the meaning of the first word in the great commission which Christ gave to His Apostles. The word "Go" will have a significance which at present does not attach to it, and this word will take the future church into all the world, so that the Gospel may really be preached to every creature. The one need of the present day is the heroic spirit which compels to the noblest deeds. Really, the age of heroes has passed. In our church life there are no grand men, such as Luther, Calvin, Wesley and Campbell to lead us. We have many men of excellent characters, and some of them are filling important spheres, but when we ask: Where are the men who fitly represent the heroic age of action? echo answers, Where? Truly may it be said that "Atlas has gone to the Hesperides, and there is no one left to hold up the skies; that Ulysses has departed on his wanderings and there is none strong enough at Ithaca to bend his matchless bow."

But the church of the future will aim to make every man a hero by infusing into him the aggressive spirit. However, all are not likely to be heroic; some will have to be carried, but the aggressive spirit will not wait on these, though it will recognize the duty of carrying all who have not strength in them-

selves. Many of these are no doubt very troublesome, even when the noblest charity is exercised toward them; and if we were engaged in a carnal strife we could well afford to leave them behind, for they undoubtedly hinder to a large extent all the earnest aggressive effort. All the same, it is impossible to reckon with the conditions of the future without taking them into account, and while this may be a hindrance to progress, it is altogether probable that even the church army of the future cannot do without its ambulance corps. There will always be enough weak souls who must be carried to give full employment to the surplus energies of the strong. Grumblers and fault-finders, like the poor, are with us always, and it is almost certain that they will not leave us in the coming church. Some men were no doubt born in the objective case. They are never pleased with anything except themselves, and they would not be pleased even with themselves if they were large enough to be seen on the other side of the personal pronoun I.

But the habit of fault-finding is no new thing under the sun. The Israelites were much given to grumbling. No people were ever more highly favored. God was with them in a very special manner. He was a pillar of cloud to them by day and a pillar of fire by night. He fed them with manna and quails, and gave them water from Horeb to drink. Yet the people murmured. The more blessing they received the more they seemed to be dissatisfied.

No wonder Moses grew impatient. He knew how little cause there was for complaint. But he did not take into account sufficiently their immaturity. They were simply big babies. They had physical growth, but their religious and mental development was sadly behind; they had been carried. They cried for the mortar-beds of Egypt. They often sighed to go back to their bondage. This feeling showed itself right at the start. At the Red Sea their demands to go back were imperative. Moses said to them, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." But God said, "Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." Here were four doctrines preached: first, the go-back doctrine; second, the cry-on doctrine; third, the stand-still doctrine; and fourth, the go-forward doctrine. The last was God's doctrine, and was consequently the true doctrine. The other three doctrines were false, and as used in these days are always misleading. The third was at once contradicted by Divine authority, and therefore should not now be used as indicating the way out of any difficulty.

The way to victory is toward the front. *Forward!* should be the watchword of every man who hopes to accomplish anything in this life. But the go-back, crying, and standing-still doctrines are not yet conquered. Indeed, in many places they are in a large majority; at least the men who do not wish to go forward are in a large majority. Progress is not always peace. To float down stream is an easy

matter, but to pull against the tide is quite another thing. Anyone can object—anyone can find fault. The world's heroes have always had to pull the grumblers after them. But even this is a noble work to do. We must not be satisfied with getting forward ourselves; we must aim to get others forward also. Unselfishness is one of the most fundamental matters connected with the Christian religion. And yet unselfishness is, in its highest form, the very highest self-interest. As a matter of fact, the only way to get on is to help others. Some men make a great noise and go through all the motions of work, but a closer examination will reveal the fact that they are practically doing nothing. What we need is real work, not pretense. Mere motion and noise are poor substitutes for genuine power and a wise application of it.

I was once crossing the Atlantic from New York to Liverpool, and after leaving New York I soon noticed that the ship was not making her usual time. I counted the revolutions of the screw and found that these were at least ten behind what they should be. A look into the engine-room revealed nothing that indicated weakness. But I was not satisfied; I asked an officer what was the matter. He replied by pointing to one of the three pistons. Said he, "That piston nearest to you is a dummy. It is moving up and down just like the other two, but it is not only useless, but worse than useless, for it is indebted to the two live pistons for even the life it shows. They

not only drive the ship, but have to pull the dummy piston along while doing it." And so I think it is with some men. They not only do nothing themselves, but the live, active, progressive workers who are driving the ship of progress have literally to draw the dummy men after them, or else the dummies would never get on at all. Let us make no mistake in this matter. It often happens that the very little activity shown by fault-finders is due wholly to the great activity of the real workers. The real workers are not only carrying the whole load of the work, but they are carrying also the men who will not work, and who really try to hinder the hard workers by fault-finding.

But this double service is quite necessary. We cannot, even if we would, disassociate ourselves from the dummies, the fault-finders, the objectors. They belong to the machinery, and must therefore be reckoned with in all our efforts at progress. But we must not stop the ship because we have to carry a dummy piston. We can at least put motion into the men who are preaching the go-back, cry-on or stand-still doctrine. I am not unmindful that these men may claim that the very motion we impart to them is a sign that they are actually driving the ship. Let us not mind that. The defects in their machinery may be remedied after a while and then these dummies may do good service in the great work of progress.

2. The church of the future will be essentially

progressive in the best meaning of that word. I do not see how this could be otherwise in a church which aims at development. Legitimate growth is only another name for normal progress. Any church which grows in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ must make progress. I am not unmindful of the fact that with some of the grumblers, to whom reference has been made, progress has become an epithet, and efficiency a crime, but to those who look at the whole matter from a truly Christian point of view it will appear perfectly evident that no church can do the work of God in this world which does not make progress a watchword and efficiency the highest proof of fitness for service.

But in pleading earnestly for progress, I do not wish to be understood as having any faith at all in noisy professions of progress. It is not necessary to talk loud and make large demonstrations of purpose. The Divine method of working should always be our example. God is economical of power. He does not waste energy. Even when He exerts His mighty strength the most He nearly always does this in silent courses. Nor is the silence broken until the power is exhausted. He never thunders without the corresponding lightning. We often thunder most when the lightning is least. Noise does not therefore necessarily imply strength; indeed it is rather a sign of weakness. Progress is not simply resistance; it may not imply any visible conflict at all.

I know we are always talking about fighting error, and no doubt there are times when this cannot be avoided. We have already seen that the church must be aggressive, and that this aggressiveness means the overthrow of all opposition. Hence there are times when the conflict between truth and error will not admit of even a temporary compromise, and at such times to fight earnestly for the truth is the highest virtue; but, after all, truth is never so beautiful as when she humbles herself in order to be charitable to the wrong-doer. It is precisely at such a moment that she best reflects the image of Him who said to the erring one: "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more."

3. The coming church will not only be aggressive and progressive, but it will also be eminently congressive. This means that Christians shall not only walk together, but that they shall meet together, worship together, and work together. In the past there has been entirely too much isolation, too little conference, and by far too little co-operation. Denominationalism is bad enough, but sectarianism is even worse. The former may exist without the latter, but neither can exist without injury to the cause of Christ. The one hinders brotherliness and Christian work, but the other literally drives out the Christian spirit, and in its stead fosters a spirit which is intensely selfish, if not devilish. The church of the future must get rid of the latter, if indeed it does not of the former. When that church has

reached its highest development (and this will be its congressive period), then such a religious congress as the one in which we are now taking part will be regarded as a normal sign of our religious development. . . .

Let us now answer the inquiry as to what the church of the future will bring with it.

1. It will bring a new era of brotherhood. Professor Drummond has been telling us about "The City without a Church." And what he has said has attracted widespread attention. But in my judgment there is a fallacy in the Professor's reasoning which some have failed to discover. If he had described a city that is all church, he would have come much nearer the truth than he has done. He seems to have a wrong conception of what the church is as it is represented in the Word of God. He evidently confounds the place of worship with the church itself, or that which really worships. The *ecclesia* of the *New Testament* is altogether a different thing from the *kuriakee* or *kuriakon,* which seems to be the thing which Professor Drummond does not find in the New Jerusalem city. This confusion of the *ecclesia* with the "house of the Lord," or the place in which the assembly gathers, is not peculiar to Professor Drummond; it is a common habit with many who write about the church. But if we fix our minds upon the assembly itself, or, better still, on all the Christians at a given place or city, we immediately see how absurd it is to suppose that

there can be a consecrated Christian city without a church. Really the thing to be aimed at is to make the whole city practically a church. In Apostolic days the style was "The church at" a place or city, such as "The church at Jerusalem," "The church at Ephesus," "The church at Thessalonica," etc., etc. We never read in the *New Testament* of churches (plural) at a city. Evidently it was the Divine intention to bring every city into subjection to the Gospel, and thus make each city co-extensive with the church at that place. . . .

However, the moment that we realize the city that is allchurch, or the city where all its inhabitants belong to the spiritual brotherhood which is represented by the ideal church, that moment we have reached a new and blessed era of brotherhood. This is what the world is sighing for, and this is exactly the socialism which the world needs. When the church in the life of its members fitly illustrates universality, spirituality and unity, then we shall have the socialism of Christ, and this will at once bring the new era of brotherhood to which I have called attention.

2. The church of the future will bring a new era of consecration and service. Who does not feel the need of such an era? Everywhere there is a painful sense of failure as regards devotedness to the cause of Christ. I greatly fear that very many professing Christians of the present day might safely be classed with the Laodiceans in the apocalyptic vision. At

best they are only lukewarm, and lack both the spirit of consecration and earnestness to work. Indeed, very few, compared with the great mass of Christians, make any decided sacrifices at all for the spread of the Gospel. How many are contributing liberally to support missionaries in the field? How many are willing to go into the field and bear the heat and burden incident to such a service?

We sometimes wonder why our missionary meetings and conventions are not better attended than they are. But the reason is not difficult to find. We must never expect interest where there is no capital. If Christians do not invest in our missionary enterprises, we cannot hope that they will come to our meetings to hear about missionary work. You cannot expect a good angler to watch intently the cork on his line when he knows he has put no bait on the hook. When we can persuade Christians to put bait on their missionary hooks, there will not be much difficulty in getting them to watch the corks. They will then come to our missionary meetings in order that they may learn what success has attended their investments. A new era of consecration and service will send thousands of missionaries into heathen lands, and will at the same time bring millions of dollars into the missionary treasuries for the support of the Gospel.

3. And lastly, the coming church will bring a new era of triumphs and peace. We are just now standing on the verge of a new century, and I cannot help

believing that this new century contains within its hidden folds a marvelous record of this world's history. But we who are now men and women can hope to see only the beginning of the glories which will be revealed. And yet this beginning will probably be more wonderful than anything our eyes have ever beheld. The past hundred years have been crowded with events which point to the coming of a new era, and this era is even now beginning to dawn upon the world. The beginning of a new year always has in it considerable significance to those who recognize the value of every moment of time. But the beginning of a new century is often the turning point with reference to some of the most important matters connected with human destiny. Who can estimate the progress that has been made within the last hundred years? Looked at from almost any point of view, the century which is just closing has had no parallel in the history of this planet. It began with a revival of the religious spirit, and especially the missionary spirit, and it is ending with a record which promises much for the twentieth century. . . .

And we ought to learn a lesson from all this. That lesson is that when there is little activity among God's children there may not be a corresponding indifference on the part of the powers of evil; but when God's people are deeply in earnest, and are waging an aggressive warfare upon the strongholds of Satan, then we may be well assured that all the forces of evil will be brought into the field.

And if we should find some such state of things as I have described prevailing at the present time, surely no one ought to be astonished. There is just now very great activity among religious people. It may not be as great as some desire, and it is certainly not as great as it ought to be; and yet it is far greater than at any period within the recollection of the present generation. I do not now refer simply to the actual work that is being accomplished. Very much is being done in this direction, but this does not represent all that we mean by activity. Thought logically goes before action, and it is the thinking of the present hour that is making highways for the workers of the future. There can be no doubt about the fact that some of this thinking is in a crude state, but even this ought to be reasonably expected. Mind no more than matter can emerge from chaos without bringing with it some of the darkness with which it was enshrouded. For many years the religious mind has been slowly working its way out of the darkness of the Middle Ages, and considering that it has had to overcome so many difficulties, there is certainly much reason for rejoicing at the progress that has been made.

At any rate, it appears to me that we are just now standing upon the dividing line of two ages. The age of struggle, conflict, war, but nevertheless the age of mighty achievements, is rapidly passing away. The age to come will be one which at least will not be entirely without the characteristics of the

age now passing. But the new age will be especially distinguished for its great victories in all the departments of human progress. It will be strongly marked by the spirit of unity which will everywhere prevail. The ushering in of the church of the future will at least be the beginning of that happy time foretold in prophecy, when the church shall become universal, and when national life shall become ecumenical—in other words, when the nations of the earth and the church of Jesus Christ shall become co-extensive. In fact, the new age will bring us to that happy period

> "When the war-drums throb no longer, and the battle-flags are furled,
> In the parliament of man, the federation of the world."

THE CHURCH OF GOD—ITS FOUNDATION

By JOHN S. SWEENEY

"WHEN Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ." (Matt. xvi:13-20.)

What is called by our Lord his "church" in this

passage is not always so designated in the *New Testament.* It is variously called the "church of God," the "kingdom of God," the "kingdom of heaven," the "house of God," the "temple of God," "God's husbandry," "God's building," "One body," the "body of Christ," etc. These are all descriptive titles of the same thing, each one of some particular phase or feature of it. All of them together pretty fully describe what we commonly call the "church."

That we may have a pretty comprehensive view of it let us notice briefly each one of its phase titles.

The name "church" is from a Greek word that means "called out," primarily, and by consequence "called together." It has in it no religious idea necessarily; but, on the contrary, it could be, and was, by the Greeks, applied to any body of people called together, irrespective of the purpose for which they were assembled. The rather uproarious assembly in Ephesus of which we have an account in the nineteenth chapter of Acts of Apostles, "called together" by Demetrius to consider the interests of the craft of the silversmiths endangered by the preaching of Paul, is three times designated by the word from which we have church, but there translated "assembly" in verses 32, 39, 41. True, things took something of a religious turn in that "assembly," but not Christianly so, or after a godly sort. Again, Stephen, in Acts vii:38, called the children of Israel, who had been called out of Egypt, the "*church* in the

wilderness." The Greek word rendered church in the *New Testament,* as these instances sufficiently illustrate, meant simply an assembly or congregation of people; a body of people called out and together. And that's all it meant. The character of any particular assembly of people, and the purpose of the assembly, must be learned from other descriptive titles, or circumstances, if learned at all.

"Church *of God*" means an assembly of people, "called of God." "My church," in the mouth of our Lord, meant the people He was going to call out of the world. The "church of God," "church of the Lord," and what Jesus calls His church, all, of course, in the *New Testament* mean the same thing; and is that body of people called of God, called of our Lord, "called," as says Paul, "by our gospel."

The church of God is not a body of people, however, called together literally and physically, as was the assembly in Ephesus referred to, or as were the children of Israel in the wilderness called "the church in the wilderness." It is a spiritual body, and its members are called out or separated from the world in a spiritual sense, and associated together upon a spiritual basis, and by spiritual bonds. Those who believe in Christ Jesus, obey Him, and trust in Him, are, by such faith, obedience and hope separated from unbelievers and associated together. The call is a spiritual one, and the dissociation and association are spiritual. So that the church is a spiritual body. And the word translated church in

the *New Testament* only describes this *spiritually called out* feature of the body of Christ.

"Kingdom" means authority, dominion, government. "Kingdom of God" means government of God. "Kingdom of heaven" is only another form of expressing the same idea. And these designations of the body of Christ are meant to express the gov*ernment* feature of it. The people God calls in Christ Jesus are to be governed, but the government is to be divine and not human—"not of this world," but of heaven.

What our Lord in one verse of the passage under examination calls His "church," He in the next verse calls "the kingdom of heaven," by church expressing the *called out* feature, and by "kingdom of heaven" expressing the *government* feature of the same thing. "The church of God" means the people called out and associated together of God; the "kingdom of God" means the divine government of the same people.

The phrase "house of God" describes another feature of the same thing: the *family* feature. The church of God is a family. God dwells in it, and is the Father of all. Jesus dwells in it, and is the elder brother. And all the members are brethren and sisters.

"The temple of God" describes the *worship* feature of the same thing. God dwells in His holy temple, and is worshiped there. It is a spiritual temple. It is not one made with men's hands. It is not made

of stones. It is not one like that at Jerusalem, grand as that was. It is not like that at Ephesus, built of magnificent stones, all covered with dust and cobwebs, in which the bats hid by day and the crickets chirruped by night; but it is a spiritual temple, made of living stones—believing, hoping, trusting, loving hearts—in which He dwells by His spirit.

There are several descriptive names by which the church is called that emphasize the *work* feature of it, such as "vineyard," "building," and "husbandry," or farm. The church is not meant simply for the saved to live in and be happy. It is meant for that, but for more than that. It is the place in which to work. None of us is called out to do nothing. Whom the Lord calls He puts to work, in His vineyard, upon His building, on His farm. They are all co-workers with God. They must be helpers with Him in saving others, and thus work out their own salvation; that is, carry out to its completion their salvation already begun.

What is so frequently called the church is also called the "body," "the body of Christ," "one body." And this name brings to the forefront the idea of *fellowship*. The body is not a physical or material, but a spiritual one. It is a "man," "one new man," but it is a spiritual man. We understand something of the intimacy of the relation of all the members of the body of a man. There are many members, but one body, one man. Every member of a living body lives in virtue of its union with

the body. Union is the organic law of all life, mineral, vegetable, animal, intellectual and spiritual. It is often said truly that "in union there is strength"; that "united we stand, divided we fall"; and that "united we live, divided we die." We can see how true this is of the members of the human body. It is just as true of a spiritual body—the body of Christ—and for the same reason—in virtue of the same law. "There is one body, and one spirit" in that body. "For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body; and have all been made to drink into one spirit." So intimate is the relation of the members of the body of Christ one to another, that the pain of one is the pain of all; the pleasure of one is the pleasure of all; the honor of one is the honor of all, and the life of one is the life of all. There is "one body," "one spirit," "one Lord," "one faith," "one baptism," and "one God and Father of all."

To understand, therefore, the various descriptive names applied in the *New Testament* to what we generally call the church, is to have a pretty comprehensive view of that divine institution.

In the second place, we learn from the Scripture in hand, that, at the time our Lord used this language, his church was not yet founded in the world. This follows manifestly from the expression, "Upon this rock I will build my church." "*Will* build"

is in the future tense, put simply beyond question by "will" the sign of the future. When any one says I *will* do this or that thing, he means by will to put the accomplishment of the thing after the expression in point of time. This is so manifestly true that one feels like he was saying what is hardly worth while when stating it.

But we are sometimes told by those who contend for what they call the identity of the church under the Old and New Testament dispensations that the Savior meant by "will build" no more than that He would *continue* to build up that which already existed in an incomplete state, as one might build higher or larger a house already in existence. But it is perfectly clear to any one not blinded by a theory, that our Lord was not speaking of building in any such sense. Notice He said not simply, "I will build my church," but "*upon this rock* I will build my church." He was speaking not of continuing a building, but of fundamental building—of building upon the foundation.

While the expression "I will build" is in the unlimited future, and fixes no time for its fulfillment; while, for anything there is in that simple expression the founding of the church might be in the very near or very distant future; still there is a circumstance mentioned in the context that fixes the time in the not very remote future. That circumstance is, that the Savior said to Peter: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of

heaven (meaning by "kingdom of heaven" the same thing as by "my church," with the government feature in front) and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." This clearly means that Peter was to have power at the door of this church, to bind and loose. It is difficult to make it mean less. Some make it mean more. There is a notion entertained by some, grounded upon this promise, that Peter keeps gate to the kingdom of glory. This may or may not be true. But our Lord was not talking of anything of the kind. He was talking of something Peter was to do "on earth." He was to bind and loose *on earth*. It is a fair inference, then, that the church was to be founded while Peter was yet living *on earth*. And this accords perfectly with our Lord's words in the last verse of our chapter; "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

Let us follow this matter up a little further. Six days later we have the transfiguration scene upon the mountain, as recorded in the next chapter. Peter, James and John were there with the Lord. Moses, the giver of the law, and Elijah, the chief of the prophets, appeared and talked with Him on the most momentous event in the history of the world, soon to transpire in the city of Jerusalem. Moses and Elijah appeared, it would seem, chiefly to *disappear*. They disappeared, leaving in sight of the three apostles

"Jesus only." And God said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." This meant the coming exaltation of Jesus. It meant the approach of His reign. It meant what Jesus meant when He had said a few days before: "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"; when He said, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven"; when He said, "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

A short time after the transfiguration scene, as we learn in the eighteenth chapter, after that there had been some discussion as to who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, "Jesus called a little child unto him and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xviii:2,3.) This shows that still the church or kingdom is not founded; or, at any rate, that the disciples were not in it. Peter had no keys yet.

Let us follow on until after the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord; and in the first chapter of Acts we learn that when Jesus and the disciples "had come together they asked him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? (That was their idea of the coming kingdom —that it was to be a restoration of dominion to

Israel.) And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." (Acts i:6-8.) Now this "power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," is evidently just what our Lord meant by "the keys of the kingdom of heaven"; and here the time of the fulfillment of the promise is fixed by the expression "after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Then, after the ascension of our Lord, when the day of Pentecost had come, the Holy Ghost did come upon them—"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts ii:4.) They were now "endued with power from on high." That day, "after that the Holy Spirit had come upon them," Peter preached Christ crucified, buried, risen, ascended and made Lord and Christ in heaven, for the first time it had ever been done.

Many heard and "were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . . Then they that gladly received his word were baptized. And the same day there were added about three thousand souls." (Acts ii:37-41.) Here we find Peter speaking with power and au-

thority from heaven. This is the meaning of the symbol of "the keys of the kingdom of heaven," and of binding and loosing on earth, with authority and sanction of heaven. Here, too, the first church was constituted. That is the meaning of "and the same day there were added about three thousand souls"—not added "*unto them.*" There is no "unto them" in the text. Those words were supplied by the translators to make the passage conform to their understanding of the matter. These three thousand souls "added" means simply three thousand souls *associated together.* This was the first church in the local sense, and the beginning of the church in the general sense. This was the constitution of the first church: three thousand persons *called out* from the world by faith in and obedience to Jesus Christ, and associated together upon the rock. After this, obedient believers "were added to the church." So that here at Jerusalem, on the first Pentecost after the ascension, we find the church was founded and Peter received the keys; that is, power to bind and loose on earth.

3. In the third place, What is meant by the rock? When our Lord said, "Upon this rock I will build my church," what did he mean by "this rock?" This is the fundamental question of our passage. It has been answered, and is answered by Romanists, and some others agreeing with them, that our Lord meant Peter himself. And they attempt to sustain their view by arguing from the meaning of the word

translated rock and from tradition. They render the passage thus: "Thou art named Peter, that is, stone, and on that very rock I will build my church." Not only do Romanists believe Peter was the rock on which the church was built, but they believe that every succeeding Pope of Rome has in his turn succeeded, in some way, in getting under the church and becoming its foundation stone, as Peter was in the beginning.

Another view, and the only other, is that by "this rock" the Savior meant what Peter had just said. It will be remembered that the disciples had been out preaching among the people and had returned, that the Savior had asked them as to public opinion about Him. They had answered. He had also asked them directly, "Who say ye that I am?" Peter had answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus answered, "Blessed art thou Simon, son of Jonas; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church"; that is to say, *upon the truth he had uttered.*

Those holding this view understand the Lord's meaning to be about this:

"Thou art Peter (a *stone*), and upon this rock (not simply a stone, but *"rock"; that* is, this truth Peter had just expressed, which had not come to him by flesh and blood), I will build my church." So

that is the issue. One party says our Lord, by "this rock," meant Peter himself; the other says he meant the divine and fundamental truth Peter had just expressed, when he said, "*Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" This much may be said without the alarming spector of philological criticism worrying us much, namely: There is just the difference between the meaning of Peter's name in the Greek, and the meaning of the word rendered "rock" in the passage, that there is between a "stone" and "rock," in the sense of the solid ledge, rock, or cliff. And then they differ in gender, one being masculine and the other neuter. And that is difference enough for much controversy. Mere verbal or philological criticism is all very well in its place, and that is where we are shut up to it. But when we are not so shut up, too much can be made of it. We can lose time on it, and it sometimes causes us to lose sight of common sense, one of God's best gifts to man.

Let us try common sense on this much disputed question. To begin with, it will be granted by both parties to the controversy, that by "this rock" our Lord either meant Peter, or the truth Peter had just expressed, one or the other. Indeed, it is difficult, in the light of the passage, to find anything else He could have meant. We can have an agreed case that far; that is, that either Peter himself, or the statement he had just made, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," was meant by

"this rock." Now, let us try common sense in seeking an answer to the question, which?

Whatever the "rock" is, it is the foundation on which the church was to be built. That will not be disputed. And now, is it not a fair presumption that when the apostles go forth to found and build up the church, they will give some prominence to the foundation, whatever it may be? They will hardly ignore it entirely, and make conspicuous other matters not at all fundamental or essential to the church, will they? We may reasonably presume not. Well, when they went forth to found the church, did they preach Peter wherever they went? Did they ever preach Peter to anybody, anywhere, that we know of? Did they ever require anybody to believe in Peter in order to come into the church? Did they require any one to confess Peter? Did they baptize in the name of Peter, or into Peter? Certainly not. Are we right certain that one-half the persons brought into the church, founded upon the rock, in the times of the apostles, ever knew that there was such a person as Peter? What did the thousands of persons brought into the church by the ministry of Paul, for instance, ever know about Peter? In preaching to sinners, and bringing them to salvation and into the church, no prominence was given by the apostles to Peter over others. Is not all this very strange if Peter was the rock on which the church was built? Is it not, in fact, unaccountable?

Now, let us try the other view, that by "this rock" our Lord meant the truth Peter had just expressed: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Did the apostles, in founding and building up the church give any prominence to this truth? Did they preach this to anybody? Did they not preach it to everybody wherever they preached? Is not this statement an embodiment of their preaching, so far as we have any record of it in Acts of Apostles? Did they not upon this truth make the issue between God and man? Did they require any one to believe this? Was not this precisely what they did require all to believe? And was not this *all* they required persons to believe in order to come into the church? For what purpose were their testimonies written? "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." (John xx:31.)

Did the apostles require of believers any verbal confession, and what was it? Was it not this same truth again, which was not revealed at the first by flesh and blood, but by the Father in heaven? And in what name did they baptize believers? Was it not "in the name of Jesus the Christ?" And were not believers "baptized into Jesus the Christ," the Son of the living God? And did they not teach persons who thus "put on the Lord Jesus the Christ," to "walk in him?" To ask these questions is to answer them, to every one even moderately well acquainted with the *New Testament* Scriptures. And does not

this look very much like the truth, that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," was made the foundation of the church?

Let us notice a few passages from the writings of the apostles bearing upon this question. First, we will hear Peter: "to whom (Christ, the Lord) coming, a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the same is made the head of the corner, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." (I Pet. ii:4-8.) In this passage the apostle teaches that Jesus, the Christ, is the living stone, the rock, unto whom coming, believers are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. This is the church of God, called a spiritual house, built on Christ, the Rock. Notice that believers are the lively stones of which it is composed.

Paul says in his epistle to the Ephesians, who were before their conversion, mostly Gentiles: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints; and of the household (or church) of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (because

they laid it), Jesus, the Christ being the chief corner; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii:19-22.) How could persons believe in Peter, and come to him, and be fitly framed together upon him as the foundation, who never knew anything of him, who never heard of him, that anybody knows of? As we have already said, no doubt hundreds and thousands of the Gentiles were brought into the church without ever having heard of Peter. No doubt hundreds and thousands of them lived and died in the church of God without knowing anything of that apostle. But, on the other hand, wherever the gospel was preached, no matter by whom, it was made known that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." Nobody came into the church without hearing and believing this.

This, then, is the rock. This is the foundation, the creed, of the church of God. Hence the language of Paul in his epistle to the church that was in the city of Corinth: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon; for other (sufficient) foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus the Christ." (I Cor. iii:10,11.) This brief passage teaches several things expressly, bearing upon our subject: It teaches that the foundation of the church "is Jesus

the Christ''—of course, as declared to be ''the Son of God.'' It shows *how* this ''is the foundation of the apostles and prophets.'' They *laid* the ''foundation''—of course, by preaching ''that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.'' The passage also teaches that there is no ''other'' sufficient foundation—no other on which persons can safely build.

4. Let us briefly consider the question, why did our Lord call the statement of Peter—''thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God''—a ''rock?'' Of course, it was not a rock, literally. Neither was Peter a ''stone.'' The one was called a rock and the other a stone by a figure of speech. And a figure of speech of the kind this is, is simply the calling of one thing by the name of another in some respects different one. Figures of speech are very common in the scriptures, as in almost all languages. We all use them, and generally to give force and emphasis to our thoughts more readily and beyond what we are able to do by the literal use of words. The truth we are considering was called a ''rock'' no doubt for the same reason that Peter was called a ''stone.'' Rock is solid, lasting, unyielding, especially as a foundation on which to build. Our Lord had before this called him a wise man who builds his house upon a rock, and him foolish who builds on the sand. He means by the use of this figure, in our passage, to say with greater emphasis than he could in literal language, that the truth Peter had just expressed was the comprehensive and funda-

mental truth of Christianity; that it was the truth, revealed not by flesh and blood, but by the Father Himself, on which men might build all their interests for time and eternity; that it would stand all the shocks of time, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it.

Peter was called a "stone," by our Savior, no doubt, to indicate his firmness *as a man,* as "flesh and blood"; and, as compared with others of his fellowmen, as measured by men, he was a man of great firmness. Peter was a "stone" among *men,* but he was not a "rock" large enough and solid enough to support the church of God. Peter was human—"flesh and blood"—as other men are. And so have been all his alleged successors—some of them intensely so—down to the present alleged incumbent. But the foundation of the church of God is not "flesh and blood" nor anything constructed or "revealed by flesh and blood." It was not even revealed by Jesus Himself in the flesh; but by the "Father who is in heaven." The fact is the church was not even built on Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, while he was in flesh and blood. The foundation of the church of God is divine and infallible. Peter, firm as he was as a man, failed signally after what the Lord said to him as recorded in our passage. And for the matter of that, faltered even after his conversion and inspiration. But "Jesus the Christ, the Son of God," fails not under any test. It is the foundation God has laid. It is His own comprehensive

truth. It will stand until the last battle is fought between truth on the one hand, and all the allied powers of earth and hell on the other.

In conclusion: What is the meaning of that phrase in our passage, which says, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it"? And, first "against" *what?* the Rock? or the church built on it? We need not stop here, however, to exercise ourselves in grammar, or to display a bit of critical acumen. It is evident our Lord meant to teach that the gates of hell should not prevail against either the Rock or the church built on it, that for the reason the one should stand, the other should also.

But what is the meaning of the "gates of hell?" This phrase can be most easily and naturally understood in the literal sense of the words. "Gates," then, are places of entrance, places of ingress and egress; as, for example, we enter a walled city, or any enclosure, through the gates. When heaven is represented as a walled city, it is said that those "who do his commandments, may enter in through the *gates* into the city." And the word translated "hell" means to those acquainted with the Greek language, "the realm of the dead," "the common receptacle of unembodied spirits." And it is the judgment of the best Biblical critics that it should never be translated "hell," as that English word has a popular meaning altogether different.

"Gates of hell," then, meant simply "entrance to the state of the dead." This is the most literal and

natural sense, and, no doubt, the one in which our Lord used it. This accords with his use of the word Rock in the same connection, and brings prominently forward the most sublime view of glory and worth of the church of God. From this point of view we may see it towering in matchless beauty and glory above all other confederations of men; eclipsing in power and splendor all earthly kingdoms, empires, and republics, based upon the Rock of Divine truth, while they are founded in the sands of human wisdom and philosophy, and supported only by the arm of flesh.

None of the governments of this world has or claim any power beyond the gates that open into the realm of the dead. Loyalty to one's civil government is a commendable trait of character. What we call patriotism seems almost a natural thing; and in the present condition of the world is a necessity. We should not disparage civil government. But, after all, what it is to us and for us it is only in and for this world—on this side the gates of death. It cannot follow us through. It does not propose to reclaim us from the prison of death. It does not even knock at the door when its subjects pass through. At the dark gate of death the proudest government on earth surrenders all claim to its subjects. It abandons them there forever, as they pass through. When her distinguished men enter the realm of the dead she lowers her flag and drapes her public buildings, and, at least seems to mourn them a few days, and then bids them fare-

well forever, and sets about filling their places, often with envy, bitterness, and strife, and sometimes in blood.

Not so the government of our Lord. It is founded upon the Rock. It stretches its proud and mighty wings over all worlds. Its banner waves over the subjects of the King even in the valley of the shadow of death. He must reign till all enemies are subdued. He will destroy death itself. He says: "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for ever more, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death." He says unto His subjects: "Because I live ye shall live also." His subjects, standing on the Rock that towers high over the wrecks of time, can serve Him in this blessed hope, singing as the days go by:

"Some build their hopes on the ever drifting sand,
Some on their fame, or their treasure, or their land,
Mine on the Rock that forever shall stand,
Jesus, the Rock of Ages."

FIRST PRINCIPLES

By ISAAC ERRETT

"I was glad to learn, from a recent number of the *Christian Standard,* that you propose to give a course of essays on what your people call "First Principles." Permit me to express the hope that you will begin soon, and that you will not forget your promise to make them plain and easy to be understood. I assure you there is great need of plain and simple instruction on these important subjects. I have, perhaps, no right to obtrude on you my own spiritual troubles and perplexities, but it may be a help to many others, troubled in the same way, if I tell you some of my difficulties and thereby direct your pen to their removal.

Please tell me, then: 1. Is it true that the disciples deny the Old Testament? 2. If so, on what grounds? 3. If not, how can you make anything clear and consistent out of the heterogeneous assemblage of books called the Bible? Is the gospel in Genesis and Judges and Ezekiel and Romans and Revelation? How are the mysteries of this strange book to be unlocked"?

—"An Inquirer" in the *Christian Standard.*

I AM obliged to "An Inquirer" for his frank statement and questions. It will give me pleasure to assist you, if possible, to a better comprehension of the plan of salvation, as developed in the Bible. I shall not, perhaps, enter upon the solution of your difficulties with as much appearance of sys-

tem as you expect to find. But, with an eye to the difficulties of others, as well as those which you mention, I shall hope, in a plain and easy method, to render help to honest and anxious inquirers.

May I ask you, first of all, to read the *New Testament* more carefully? The very fact of a *new* testament, will or covenant should arrest your attention. If a *new* will or covenant is now in force, and the *old* one has passed away, as Paul affirms (Heb. viii:13), it will be at once apparent to you that *your* fate is not *immediately* involved in the contents of *former* wills or covenants; and that, however interesting or valuable the study of former testaments may be, an understanding of them is not vital to your interests. Not Genesis, nor Judges, nor Ezekiel, can make known to you the will of God *toward you,* if there is a *new* testament. In saying this, we do not *deny* the inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures, but *affirm* it; for we can not with propriety talk of a *new* testament as divine, without implying that the *old* testament, which it supersedes, was from the same source. If a man makes two wills, the fact that only the latter is *now* authoritative does not certainly imply that the former was not from the same hand. Paul says: "We know that what the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law" (Rom. iii:19). But to Christians he says: "Ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. vi:15).

Moreover, if there is a *new* testament, and, as

Paul says, a testament is only of force after the testator's death (Heb. ix:16,17), it is evident that you must not only come away from the Old Testament, but from the four Gospels likewise, before you can learn what there is for you in this will. It was not of force until after Jesus died, and rose again; and it passed into the hands of His executors, the twelve apostles, and was by them opened and announced after it had been sealed with His blood, and after the Holy Spirit came down from heaven, to guide them into all truth in announcing and interpreting it. You must learn the will, therefore, either from what the Lord told them He had put in it (Matt. xxviii:18-20), or from the will itself, as unfolded and announced by these executors, after they received the Spirit (Acts ii).

That the Old Testament is not absolutely necessary to acquaint you with the way of salvation may be learned from the fact that these apostles went into Gentile lands with the *new* testament or covenant, and made Christians of thousands who knew nothing about the former testament. Read the Book of Acts entire. This was not because the Old Testament was not from God—for when they preached to Jews, who had the Old Testament, they took their Scriptures and preached Jesus to them. But the fact that Gentiles were made Christians by the *Gospel,* without leading them through the Old Testament proves that the way of salvation can be learned from the Gospel without the law.

Yet we recognize the inspiration of the Jewish Scriptures, and we will endeavor to show you that, while they are not *authoritative* with us, they form an essential part of the development of the plan of human redemption.

We called your attention above to certain considerations to convince you that the Old Testament was no longer in force; that the will of God for you and for me, and for all now living, is to be sought in the *New Testament*—in that testament which was not of force until Jesus died and rose again, but which, ever since the executors or "ministers of the *New Testament*" opened it on the day of Pentecost succeeding the resurrection of Jesus (Acts ii), has been to all nations the will of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. At the same time we sought to show that while the facts prove that the *authority* of the Old Testament has ceased, they prove the *inspiration* of the Old Testament writings. We need enter into no labored argument to prove this. Assuming the divine mission of Jesus, his teachings settle the question. He affirmed that "all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me," (Luke xxiv:44). He thus recognizes the three general divisions under which the Jews comprehended all their Scriptures. The *law* contained the five books of Moses. The *prophets* embraced the writings of the *former prophets*, as they were termed, the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings; and the *latter*

prophets, or those which are generally called now the prophetical books, with the exception of Daniel. The *hagiorapha,* or holy writings, comprehended Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the two books of Chronicles. We say that our Lord in acknowledging these as the Scriptures, out of which His own divine mission was to be proved, asserts their inspiration.

We are aware that your mind is confused at this point; and you are not alone. You will ask, if inspired, why not of authority? They are of authority *as witnesses* of the Christ, but not of authority *as a law* to us.

"Is God, then, capricious—making one set of Scriptures, and then setting them aside—making one testament, and then, like a man who changes his mind, destroying that will, and making a new one that pleases him better?"

Not at all. To rid your mind of confusion, you must learn one important truth—that the development of the plan of human redemption was *gradual —progressive.* The law of *progressive development* seems to pervade the universe. Science reveals it in the physical universe in the structure of worlds. We need not be surprised, therefore, to find it in the moral universe, in the government of rational natures. We may readily conceive the idea of worlds of matter rising into instant perfection, by omnipotent energy; but we can not understand how mere

omnipotence can control *mind* into instant submission. Rational beings must be plied with *motive;* they must be brought themselves to *choose* the right. This is not accomplished by physical force. It must come by conviction, persuasion, conversion. But to take a race, which, in the perverted exercise of its freedom, is drifting away from God, into atheism and utter lawlessness, and prepare them to be saved —to come under the control of such a Lord and Saviour as Jesus is—was not the work of a day, or a year, or a century. We are sometimes asked:

"Why did not Jesus come as soon as man sinned? Why delay for four thousand years? Why set up institutions and laws that must in the end be abrogated? Why cumber the plan of salvation with a testament that has to be taken away as imperfect?" And this we take to be your difficulty. We reply: The fact that God did not instantly reveal a complete plan of salvation, but took four thousand years to develop it, proves that there were difficulties in the way which required a *gradual unfolding* of His purposes. We may not be able fully to enter into the reasons for this. But there are some reasons for it which we may at least partially understand.

1. Men must learn the odiousness and curse of sin, and the ruin which it inevitably works, before they are even willing to be saved from it. This can only be learned by experience—our own experience, or that of others. Time had to be given, therefore, for the accumulation of sinful experiences.

2. Men had to learn that they could not save themselves from sin. This is a hard lesson. The pride of the human heart does not easily give way. When the prodigal had wasted his substance in riotous living, his pride would not let him return until he had made the most desperate efforts to retrieve his fortunes. Not until he reached the point of utter despair of his own efforts, through a succession of most humiliating failures, was he willing to arise and go to his father. This is but a picture of human nature—of the race. It required time, therefore, for a succession of human experiments in government and religion.

3. A sinful condition of the human soul does not allow of immediate intercourse with God. Sin erects fearful barriers between man and God. God can only reveal Himself *at a distance.* It required a patient succession of revelations, therefore, to overcome the ignorance of God into which sin plunged the race, and prepare mankind for a full revelation of the divine nature and character.

These are some of the reasons why the salvation of God was not immediately revealed in its fullness.

Let us seek an illustration. A father has seven sons. They grow rebellious on his hands. He could *force* them into instant subjection, but that would not suit his purpose. He recognizes the rational nature they possess, and knows that they can not attain the true dignity of their being, so as to possess

a worthy manhood, unless they are *persuaded* to be good. He will not, then, employ force, except as corrective, until all other means have failed, and they become hopelessly incorrigible. *Then* he may be compelled to cast them off entirely. Meanwhile he seeks to govern them firmly, but kindly; bearing with their perverseness, rewarding them for obedience, and punishing them with more or less severity, as he finds necessary for his authority and their good. Still his kindness is spurned, and his authority condemned.

His boys, as they grow up, become more restive under authority, and more stubbornly bent on pursuing their own ways. There is one expedient left: *set them adrift; throw them on their own resources.* They will learn, perhaps, in the school of experience, lessons dearly bought, but which they will learn in no other way. Nothing but experience, it is evident, will take the conceit out of them. So he lets them go every one his own way. But as he has ulterior purposes of grace in letting them go—as he means to hold himself in readiness to receive them when they shall desire to return—he does not entirely abandon them even now. He retains *one* at home and makes him the depository of his counsels, and the recipient of peculiar favors, that through him he may still be able to operate indirectly on the absent prodigals, and hold them by the invisible chain of his providence until the "fullness of time" for their penitential restoration. They are all equally guilty,

and his election of any one over the rest to fill this place in his own house is purely a matter of grace.

He chooses the one who will best suit his purpose, appoints him his patrimony, and establishes with him paternal relations of peculiar tenderness, while the rest are away on their wild career of experiment. But he elects him not for his own sake mere, *but for the sake of the lost sons,* that they, through him, may yet be brought back. Thus in all their wanderings they are still watched, and often influenced unknown to themselves. Even the son who stays at home is borne with in many wrongs, for the sake of his influence over them. And when the time comes that they are weary of their vain experiments, and begin to think of returning to their father's house, he is ready, through his son, to communicate his willingness to receive them, and reinstate them in his favor.

Let the first part of this illustration answer for God's dealings with our race during the first two thousand years, during what is called the patriarchal age. Then, when the nations "did not like to retain God in their knowledge, He gave them up to a reprobate mind," and abandoned them to their own devices. But He chose Abraham, and the nation springing from him through Isaac and Jacob, to *stay at home,* and to be to Him a peculiar people above all people on the face of the earth. He made a testament or covenant for them, *but not alone for their*

own sakes; it was for the sake of the prodigal children who had gone from home, that through this nation He might keep watch and ward over them for their final reconciliation. These nations experimented in government, philosophy and religion for two thousand years, and failure was heaped on failure until, footsore in their wanderings, and heartsick in their failures—all their substance wasted in riotous living—they began to think of their Father's house, and were ready to listen to overtures. *Then,* "in the fullness of time," Jesus came, and the Gospel was published to the nations.

That the Jewish nation served this purpose, and that they were elected to their position with a view to accomplish such a purpose, is evident from numerous Scriptures. Their location is a geographical center, whence light could successfully radiate—their slavery in Egypt, the center of learning and of idolatry—their connection with Tyre and Sidon, and other great sources of commercial influence—their captivity in Babylon, and their dispersion among the nations, are among the prominent facts that indicate the ulterior purposes of Jehovah in making them His own people and giving them His law and counsel. See Ex. ix:16; xv:13-17; xxxii: 11-13; Josh. ii:9-11, and the books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel. All the nations formed a school, rebellious though they were; and the Jews were the blackboard on which God wrote His lessons and wrought out His problems.

Hence, in this progressive development, we have three successive dispensations:

1. Patriarchal.	1. The Family.	1. Domestic.	1. Theophany.
2. Jewish.	2. The State.	2. National.	2. Law.
3. Christian.	3. The Church.	3. Ecumenical.	3. Gospel.

The first period was marked by a vindication of *the being and providence of God,* in opposition to the atheism into which the posterity of Cain were drifting. He that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Its revelations were in personal manifestations of Deity and in special rewards and punishments.

The second was marked by a vindication of the *unity* of God, in opposition to the idolatries into which the nations were wandering. Its revelations unfolded the truth, justice and holiness of the one living and true God.

The third was marked by the *incarnation*—the vindication of Jesus as the Son of God, in opposition to all human schemes of salvation and all human lordship over the soul of man. Its revelations unfold the condescension, mercy and love of God in Christ. Thus we have God revealed,

1. In special appearances —Theophany.	1. Providence.	1. God in the Family.
2. In Words.	2. Law.	2. God in the Nation.
3. In Flesh— Immanuel— God with us.	3. Grace.	3. God in Humanity —*for the race.*

"The law (*the type*) came by Moses, the grace and the truth (*reality*) came by Jesus Christ" (John i:17). We reach the summit of these purposes when we hear Jesus announcing—"All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go, therefore, disciple the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Did you ever visit a printing-office? If so, you have been impressed with the fact that the "art preservative of all arts" has, to the uninitiated, many mysteries. As you looked on the types scattered with rapid hand, here and there, in various boxes, apparently without regard to order—then "set up" in the composing-stick, transferred to galleys, "made up" in the "form," and "locked up" in the "chase," ready for the pressman—you could scarcely catch a gleam of intelligence as to the mode by which thought is made visible on paper. Perhaps, looking over the form when made up, you might gather from the cuts and the headings and the catch-lines some faint outline of the leading thoughts meant to be conveyed. But if you undertook to read the intelligence through the types, you would find it a very difficult task. But when the types make their impression on paper, and you see the *antitypes* on the printed sheet, you read without difficulty. You learn that in all the apparent confusion and mystery of typesetting, intelligent mind has been marshaling the types into order, according

to "copy," so that the printed sheet exhibits the very thoughts and words contained in the copy that lay before the printer on his case. No blind chance could have brought the types together thus into an orderly arrangement, so as to make words, sentences, paragraphs, and complete essays. Their intelligent utterances prove that they were arranged by *design* —by intelligence working according to pattern or "copy" placed in the compositor's hands.

Equally confused and mysterious to you is the Old Testament. Moses was, so to speak, a printer. God furnished him a font of type, and gave him "copy." "See that thou make all things according to the pattern shown thee in the mount" (Ex. xxxv: 40). Moses set up the tabernacle and the Jewish worship according to copy. But you can not read it, except in dim outline—here and there a heading or a picture furnishing an obscure idea of what is intended. But in the *New Testament*—the Gospel—the impression is *worked off,* as the printers say: and you have *the antitype,* which, like the printed sheet, is plain reading.

You must view the Old Testament, therefore, from the Christian standpoint, and all is clear. The Old Testament is a system of types, figures, symbols. It is *practical* religion, adapted to the childhood of the race. It presented to the eye, in symbol, the outlines of the great truths of redemption, and in its typical worship familiarized the minds of men with the ideas of sin, of sacrifice, of pardon, of

righteousness and sanctification, of rewards and punishments; but in such an imperfect way as to leave the constant impression of incompleteness, accompanied with the promise of better things to come. Thus, as Paul says (Gal. iii:24), "The law was (not *is*) our schoolmaster (paidagogos), to bring us unto Christ." The pedagogue was the *child-tender,* to whom children were committed to be led to exercise, to be conducted to and from school, to be superintended, and sometimes to be taught some of their first lessons. Such offices did the law perform dealing with men in a state of tutelage; but, adds Paul, "now that faith has come, *we are no longer under a pedagogue.*" The law was introduced for certain purposes, "until the promised seed (the Messiah) should come."

From all that has been said before, we gather up the main designs of the former dispensations, and learn the uses of the Old Testament Scriptures.

1. They contain a historic development of the purpose of God to redeem a sinful race. Here we learn the kingdom of God to be, according to the Saviour's teaching, of gradual development. "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mark iv:38).

2. They present a record of the *moral government of the world*—showing how the events of time were strung on a single thread that stretched along the ages: that thread was the purpose of God to prepare the race for the coming of the Redeemer.

The rise and fall of kingdoms and empires, as well as the election and reprobation of individuals; and the captivities of the tribes of Israel and Judah, as well as their establishment in the land of Judaea, were all arranged and overruled for this one purpose.

3. They reveal the will of God, as addressed to patriarchs and Jews—not His will in reference to us.

4. They contain the types and prophecies of the coming salvation; and are, therefore, a great storehouse of evidence for the divinity of the *New Testament,* for they hold, locked up in permanent forms, the types of gospel truth and gospel blessings. "Christ is the *end* of the law to the believer." "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

5. As moral principles are immutable and eternal, it follows that many most valuable and precious lessons of truth, righteousness and piety stand on the pages of the Old Testament, which are of equal application to persons under all dispensations. Hence "the things that were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope" (Rom. xv:4).

6. Its developments of human nature and character are of priceless value. The severe and terrible truthfulness with which the Holy Spirit records the lives of men and women—the virtues of the bad and the vices of the good being all daguerreotyped in the light of truth, without apology, defense, explanation, encomium or even exclamation—render it the only

genuine gallery of portraits of human character. No uninspired biographies or autobiographies can stand in comparison. The awful, but divine, impartiality of perfect truth renders the Old Testament, merely as a record of human nature, entirely unique and invaluable.

But a book of authority, to teach *us* what to do, it is not. The Gospel is not found in it, except in type and promise—precisely the forms in which it can not have authority. The spirit, genius, laws, ordinances, promises and threatenings of the Gospel are not found on its pages, except as an adumbrative and preparatory system contains in it the germs of all that is afterward to burst into full life. The pedagogue performed his full office, not in teaching the world salvation, but in leading the world to Christ for salvation. The very last injunction in the Old Testament is: "Remember ye the *law of Moses,* my servant, which I commanded him in Horeb *for all Israel,* with the statutes and judgments" (Mal. iv:4). It was the law of *Moses*—not of CHRIST; for *all Israel*—not for *all nations.*

In closing the discussion of the Old Testament I must anticipate an objection which will probably rise in your mind. If God is perfect, and all His works are perfect, how could He be the author of an imperfect system? Does it not derogate from the honor and perfection of Deity to speak of a system of His own devising as "inferior," "imperfect," "shadowy," etc.? Everything that God creates is perfect

for its own ends. The night is as perfect as the day, for its own uses; but we do not dishonor God by calling the one darkness and the other light. The moon is as perfect as the sun; but it is no dishonor to God to say that the sun is brighter than the moon. The child is as perfect, it may be, as man; but it is perfect *as a child.* It is no dishonor to the child to say that the man is larger, stronger, wiser. So was the law perfect *as a pedagogue,* as a *moon,* as a *type.* For its own use it was perfect. But its object was not to teach the way of salvation, nor to give life. And we do the law no dishonor when we say that the gospel is a better revelation—that the *"New Testament"* has a "better mediator," contains "better promises," and is indeed a "better covenant."

Classification of Books of the New Testament

Having glanced at the Old Testament writings, and hastily traced the progressive development of the divine purpose in the redemption of our race, we have learned enough to establish us in the conviction that those writings do not contain a law for use—that their authority has passed away. The same God who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke to the fathers by the prophets, has, in these last days, spoken to us by His Son. We come, then, to what is called the *New Testament.* And you ask if this is, from first to last, a book of authority; and if we may find everywhere in its pages a knowledge of salvation and of duty? We are com-

pelled to answer, No. What is called the *New Testament* is made up, as you are aware, of a number of documents, written at different times, by different persons, with different objects in view. There is no difficulty in reaching this conclusion. A careful reading of the documents will enable anyone of ordinary intelligence to classify them in such a way as to give a proper order of succession to the different writings, and a character of completeness to the whole.

1. He will find four biographies, written by different authors, and to different classes of persons, but all having the same definite object in view—to exhibit the incarnation, life, character and mission of the Son of God, the Saviour of men. They embrace what is necessary to be known of Jesus, from His birth to His resurrection and ascension. They are written with the avowed object of *furnishing the materials of a life-giving faith in the Son of God.* "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John xx:31). These records wind up with a revelation of the grand purpose of the mission of Jesus, *to furnish salvation for the race;* and an announcement of a coming Spirit of truth, under whose guidance chosen men should bear the offer of this salvation to all the world.

2. He will find a succeeding book of history, called Acts of the Apostles, taking up the narrative of events where the first four books left it, and pro-

ceeding to give a history of the preaching of the gospel and its results; a narrative of this salvation offered and accepted—showing how sinners were converted into Christians, being saved from their sins and brought into the Church of Christ. This is to you, let me say, in your present condition, the most important book in the Bible. It shows the Gospel, as preached to Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles; to kings, princes, nobles, philosophers, religionists, infidels, slaves and barbarians; to good and bad, rich and poor, learned and ignorant. It may surprise you to find that the original, inspired preachers of the Gospel did not keep their hearers at the base of Sinai, where you have been for a lifetime deafened by the thunders of the law; and that they never said one word about regeneration being a miracle; in fact, that there is not one sermon, in all that are reported, *about* regeneration! But you will find here precisely how the Gospel was preached, and how the guilty were led to the fountain of mercy for salvation.

3. He will find a cluster of epistles, addressed *to saved persons*—to *Christians*—to give them a knowledge of the duties, dangers, trials and hopes of Christian life; epistles which correct the errors, and reveal the perils, of the Christian; give the instruction, and unfold the motives, necessary to furnish him to all good works.

4. He will find a book of peculiar and imposing symbols, largely concealing and partially revealing

the fortunes of the church through successive ages—symbols meant alike to conceal and to reveal—a kind of *dark-lantern* to be carried by the Christian pilgrim, throwing no light out to the world, but to be used as occasion serves, by the believer, to throw light ahead on his pathway and cheer him with the coming triumph and glory.

So, then, we have this classification of the *New Testament* writings:

1. Biographical.	2. Historical.	3. Epistolary.	4. Prophetical.
1. Christ in person.	2. Christ in the gospel.	3. Christ in his people.	4. Christ in providence.
1. Christ, as the Apostle of the Father, working out a scheme of salvation.	2. Christ, as Lord and Saviour, tendering a perfect salvation to the sinful.	3. Christ, as Head of the church, reigning in and over his people.	4. Christ, as Sovereign over all things. Controlling events of ages for final triumph of his truth.

So that we go to the four Gospels to learn of the Saviour, to the Acts, to learn how to be saved; to the Epistles, to learn how the saved ought to live; and to the Apocalypse, to learn the fortunes of the church and the destiny of its faithful members.

We wish now to speak more particularly of the first four books of the *New Testament*.

Design of the Biographical Books. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.—We have just given a classification of the writings of the *New Testament,* the object of which was to show that the documents contained in that volume were not all written for the same purpose. This is of more importance than, at first sight, it may seem to be. It was only the other day we read an editorial designed to prove that baptism is not for the remissions of sins. The editor quoted, with a triumphant air, the following Scripture:

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John i:9).

We remember having read the same answer to the inquiry of an anxious sinner on a placard issued by the Young Men's Christian Association of Detroit, and posted up at the entrance of their rooms. Now, when you reflect that John's first epistle was not addressed to the unconverted, but to Christians, and that he is stating to Christians how *they* may obtain forgiveness, you will at once see the deception practiced in such an application of this Scripture. With equal propriety might we apply to Christians the language of Peter to a throng of rebel suppliants for mercy:

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins."

But the editor aforesaid, not content with one misapplication, sought to fortify his false position

by another Scripture: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. x:9,10).

Now, this language, although occurring in an epistle addressed to Christian, is evidently meant to express the condition of salvation offered to a sinful world. This the context clearly shows. But the perversion here consists in making the penitent *sinner's* confession of *the Lord Jesus* equivalent to the penitent *Christian's* confession *of his sins.* So you see how important it is to note *to whom* the Scriptures are addressed, and *for what purpose* any passage that may be under consideration was written.

We have already shown that the Old Testament does not contain an authoritative announcement of the Gospel. We now call your attention to the fact that the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were not written as an authoritative announcement of the terms of salvation. They reveal the *Saviour* rather than the *salvation*—what He did to bring salvation to us, rather than what we are to do to make the salvation ours. True, before these records close, the terms of salvation are announced; but it is not *the design*—the main scope—of the writings to treat of these. They furnish, as before stated, the material of a life-giving faith. They make known to us the Saviour. They reveal His character and His

work. They make us familiar alike with his teachings and example, and give us a broad and firm basis for faith, hope and love, in a knowledge of his human sympathy and his divine power, his labors of love, his sacrifice for sin, his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to glory. Hence Luke sets forth his design in writing to be, "that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou has been instructed" concerning Jesus Christ.

But, all this while, the *law of Moses* remains in force. Let us call your attention to a few significant facts, which it is important to keep in mind, in the study of these four books.

1. Jesus was a Jew, "born under the law," and subject to the law. He did not allow his own work to do dishonor in any way, to the living authority of the law of Moses. He came not "to *destroy* the law, or the prophets: but to *fulfill.*" Matt.v:17,18.

2. He taught his disciples to observe the law, and receive the instructions of its authorized expounders. "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." Matt. xxiii:2,3.

3. His own personal mission was to the Jews only. Matt. xv:24.

4. The twelve and the seventy whom he sent out, were limited to the Jews in their mission. Matt. x: 5; Luke x:1.

5. When Moses and Elijah—the great law-giver and law-restorer—laid down their honors at his feet,

and the voice of the Father announced the transfer of authority to Jesus, saying, "This is my beloved Son; *hear ye him,*" those who were cognizant of the fact were forbidden to make it known until after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. See Matt. xvii:1-9. It is most evident, therefore, that the authority of Moses was not to cease, and the authority of the Messiah was not to be proclaimed, until after His resurrection.

6. He taught His disciples that He must *go away* to *receive* His kingdom. Luke xix:12.

7. His church was not yet established. Matt. xvi:18.

It was *after* His resurrection that He claimed "all authority in heaven and earth." Matt. xxviii:18. But He forbade the assertion or annunciation of that authority until He should ascend to heaven and send down the Holy Spirit to guide His apostles into all truth. Luke xxiv:49; John xvi:13.

We cannot avoid the conclusion, therefore, that the terms of salvation through Jesus Christ have yet to be announced with authority. The succeeding Book of Acts will inform us of this announcement.

It remains to be said that these four Gospels are of the most vital importance to us. They reveal the Saviour Himself, and present to us the divine foundation of faith and hope. Here is "God manifest in the flesh"; no longer hidden in a pavilion of darkness, with a benighted world groping vainly after Him;

nor proclaiming His presence in earthquake and tempest and thunder and lightning, as at Sinai—"the great and the dreadful God"; but dwelling among us in the tabernacle of our own humanity—in us and of us; looking out upon us with human eyes, ministering to us with human hand, weeping human tears in sorrow and sympathy over our woes, binding up our wounds, healing our diseases, with human lips speaking counsels of heavenly wisdom and grace, and bearing our nature in His arms of divinity through all its conflicts, sorrows and tribulations, nay, even through the helplessness of death, to final triumph and immortal bliss!

Here are the *demonstrations* of God's power and willingness to save. We need no longer doubt either His love or His ability—we need no longer remain ignorant of His gracious design in behalf of our guilty and dying race. Here is the great Sacrifice—the Lamb of God—bearing away the sins of the world. Here are the culminations alike of love and of justice, in the voluntary death, for our sins, of the sinless One, "that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Here is also the destruction of death's awful dominion, and the up-springing of life from the grave. Life and immortality are brought clearly to light.

Ah! you may have doubts about human theories of regeneration, and be confused by the contradictory teachings of sects in theology; but can you not

understand Jesus Christ? Rather, can you, with an honest heart, fail to understand Him? Do you doubt that He is the Son of God—that He has life in Himself—that He gave His life for you—that He is stronger than death—that He lives in heaven a Prince and a Saviour, to grant repentance and remission of sins? Do you not *love* Him? Has your heart never been touched by His gentle words of pity and mercy? Has He sorrowed and toiled and wept, and died, in vain? Do not His tears and blood plead mightily with you? Have not His searching words of counsel and reproof convicted you of sin, made you ashamed of your transgressions? And when He has shown you a father, with open arms, running to embrace with love the returning prodigal, have you not felt that you, too, could say, "I will arise and go to my Father?"

And yet you have been waiting for a miracle to regenerate you! Rest assured that if you believe in the Son of God, and for His sake can turn away from sin and rebellion, and make it your pleasure to do His will, you may be at once admitted to the full joys of His salvation. We are to receive Jesus, believe in Jesus, love Jesus, serve Jesus—not a theoretical, philosophical or theological Jesus, but the living, personal, loving holy Jesus of the *New Testament;* and all the regeneration the heart can know is in being led to receive His teachings, trust His sacrifice, accept His authority, and enjoy the purifying and ennobling influences of His love.

"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in me might not abide in darkness, but have the light of life." "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him; and we will come to him, and make our abode with him." Thus all the treasures of saving grace and redeeming love come to us through *faith* and *obedience.* We have settled the greatest question of life when we have decided that Jesus is able to save and is worthy to rule us. It but remains to learn what He would have us do, and heartily accept and obey it. The four Gospels settle the first point. The Acts of the Apostles will guide us to the second. Before we leave the *testimonies* of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—for *testimonies* they are to be *believed,* not *laws* to be *obeyed; facts* and *principles* to enlighten us concerning the coming kingdom, and not *statutes* and *ordinances* to regulate Christian life—we must invite you to consider the different *missions* which these books unfold.

1. The mission of John the Baptist. 2. The mission of Jesus. 3. The mission of the twelve. 4. The mission of the seventy. 5. The mission of the Holy Spirit. 6. The mission of the apostles. These six missions are all unfolded to view in these four books. A proper comprehension of them will do much to prepare us to understand the gospel of salvation.

There are three questions concerning all these missionaries (for a missionary is one *sent* upon a mission) which it is necessary to ask:

1. *By* whom sent?
2. *To* whom sent?
3. *For what purpose* sent?

Let us briefly consider these questions in reference to these different missions.

1. JOHN THE BAPTIST. A. *By* whom was he sent? Answer: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." John i:6. B. *To* whom was he sent. Answer: "Behold, I send *you* (Jews) Elijah the prophet." Mal. iv:5. See also Matt. xvii: 12,13. C. *For what purpose* sent? Answer: To prepare the way of the Lord, by turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers: to proclaim the coming of the kingdom, and to introduce the King. See Mal. iv:6; Matt. iii:1-3; John i:29-34, and iii:25-33.

Not *here,* then, do we find a mission, world-embracing, in which *our* salvation is apprehensible. The mission of John is a preparatory work.

2. JESUS OF NAZARETH. A. *By* whom sent? Answer: The "Father hath sent me." John v:36. B. *To* whom sent? Answer: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt. xv:24. C. *For what purpose* sent? Answer: "I am come a light into the world, that he that believeth in me may not abide in darkness." John xii:46. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save the lost." Luke xix:10. "To this end was I born, and for this purpose came I into the world, that I might bear witness unto the truth." John xviii:37. "He

shall save his people from their sins." Matt. i:21.

As we are not Jews, this personal mission of Jesus was not to us. It is still a preparatory work.

3. THE TWELVE IN THEIR FIRST MISSION, AND THE SEVENTY. A. *By* whom sent? Answer: "Behold *I* send you," said Jesus. Matt. x:16; Luke x:3. B. *To* whom sent? Answer: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt. v:5,6; Luke x:1. C. *For what purpose* sent? Answer: "As you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. x:7; Luke x:9.

Evidently this, too, is a preparatory work.

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT. A. *By* whom was this divine Missionary sent? Answer: "But the Advocate, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name." John xiv:26; xvi:7. B. *To* whom sent? Answer: *To the Apostles.* "Whom the world can not receive." John xiv:17. "I will send him unto you (apostles)." John xvi:7. C. *For what purpose* sent? Answer: "When he is come (to you, my apostles), he will convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment." John xvi:8. "He will guide you (apostles) into all truth." Verse 8. "He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." Verse 9.

Now, as the "world cannot receive" this Spirit, and as the promise is to send the Spirit to the apostles, and not to the world, that the world, through

the apostles, might be convinced of sin, righteous and judgment, it is evident that sinners are not immediately interested in *this* mission. It, too, is preparatory. We come then, lastly, to

5. The Second Mission of the Twelve. A. *By* whom sent? Jesus says, "All authority in heaven and earth is given unto me. Go ye, therefore." Matt. xxviii:18,19. B. *To* whom sent? Answer: "All nations." Matt. xxviii:19. "All the world—every creature." Mark xvi:15. C. *For what purpose* sent? Answer: "Preach the gospel to every creature." Mark xvi:15. "Disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," Matt. xxviii:19,20. "Repentance and remission of sins shall be preached in my name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke xxiv:47-49. "Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." John xx:22,23. "I give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matt. xvi:19.

Here, then, is a mission which *does* immediately

concern us; for it embraces "all the world"—"every creature," down to the "end of the world." It is a mission which has salvation in it—the remission of sins; and "all things" which saved people are to be taught to do. It has the HOLY SPIRIT in it; for the Spirit is promised to the apostles to guide their preaching and teaching. It has CHRIST in it; for the Gospel of Christ is put in their keeping, and the Spirit is promised to take the things of Christ and show unto them. It has all of the Old Testament in it that concerns our salvation; for the Lord "opened their understandings, that they might understand the (Jewish) scriptures, to prepare them to preach the gospel." Luke xxiv:45-48. So that all of the Old Testament, and of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, needful for our conversion and salvation, is comprehended in this mission of the apostles. It wants but the coming of the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth, and then we shall have found our point of rest; we can sit at their feet and learn the way of salvation.

Acts of Apostles. Day of Pentecost

We have traced the progressive developments of the purposes of God through the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations. We have watched the finger-boards along the way, all pointing forward to something better yet to be revealed. We have sought an answer to the question, "Wherefore, then, serveth the law?" and have, we trust, at least to some extent,

recovered your mind from confusion as to the design and purpose of the Old Testament. We have also become acquainted with the object of the four narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and have seen John the Baptist, Jesus, the twelve, and the seventy, all pointing forward to a coming kingdom, not far in the future, whose treasures of salvation should be unlocked to a perishing world as soon as Jesus should receive His authority, and the Holy Spirit should descend from heaven to endow the chosen ambassadors for their glorious mission. The last charge of the Lord to His apostles was, "Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." Acts i:1-5.

This brings us to *the day of Pentecost* and its most significant developments, as narrated in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Here we reach our point of rest. Here is the grand culmination of the scheme of salvation. Here is the setting up of the kingdom. Here is seen "the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands," which Nebuchadnezzar saw, and which is yet to become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. Here is the "Fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."

We may well afford to linger here a little while, and survey the sacred ground, and endeavor to take in the greatness and grandeur of the events which transpired on that memorable day of Pentecost.

You are, perhaps, aware that the Jewish feast of Pentecost, observed fifty days from the Passover

feast, Lev. xxiii:15,16, was the *feast of harvest,* Ex. xxiii:16, when the first-fruits of the wheat harvest were waved before the Lord, Lev. xxiii:17, the earnest of the harvest soon to be gathered in. In later times, it was also observed, though, so far as we know, without divine authority, in commemoration of the giving of the law. This special day of Pentecost which we are now contemplating is possessed of peculiar significance, in view of these facts; for now the "first-fruits" from humanity's white fields are to be offered to God, and the converts of this day are to be but the earnest of the mighty in-gathering. Now, also, the *new* law is to be promulgated from Mt. Zion, and the "word of the Lord" is to "go forth from Jerusalem."

Let us, in this place, mention some of the reasons why this Pentecostal occasion has special significance.

1. *This is the first time that Jesus is heard from, after His ascension.* Condemned on earth by the highest ecclesiastical and civil tribunals known in the land, as worthy of death, He appealed His case to the Supreme Court, and carried up His cause "to him who judgeth righteously"—to Him who is higher than the highest, before whose dread bar Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate must appear to be judged, and from whose decisions there is no appeal.

On this day we receive tidings, by the divine Spirit-messenger, of the result of the final trial. The unrighteous decisions of the lower courts have been

reversed. He who was condemned for blasphemy, because He said, "I am the Son of God," is owned in heaven as the Son of God, and all the angels are commanded to worship Him. He who was condemned for treason because He said He was a King, is exalted in heaven to the throne of the universe, to reign until all His enemies are subdued. As the authority of Jesus could not be proclaimed until the scandal of these legal decisions was removed, this day furnishes the first opportunity for the inauguration of His reign; for this day He is "justified by the Spirit," and the glorious tidings are announced that "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

2. *This is the day the Holy Spirit begins His mission for the conversion of the world.* All through the four Gospels we are reminded of the superior interest attaching to the coming dispensation of the Spirit. John pointed the people away from his baptism to a coming baptism in the Holy Spirit of far greater import. Jesus said to the people, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me, from his inner self shall flow rivers of living water. But this he spoke of the Spirit, which those who believed in him were about to receive; for the Holy Spirit had not yet been given, *because Jesus had not yet been glorified.* John vii: 37-39. The time has now come, then, when, in the fullest sense of an earthly salvation, the thirsty may come and drink; for Jesus has been glorified, and

the Holy Spirit has been given. Please read John, chapters xiv, xv, xvi. You will there learn the importance of the mission of the Spirit, and how impossible it was that the apostles could proceed to open the will of the Lord Jesus, or accomplish any of their ambassadorial functions, until the Spirit came to "guide them into all truth."

3. *This day we reach the fulfillment of most important prophecies concerning the dispensation of grace.* Please read carefully Isa. ii:1-5; Mic. iv:1-3; Ps. cx. All these point forward to the "last days" of the Jewish economy, when a law shall go forth from Zion and a word of the Lord from Jerusalem, so powerful, revolutionizing and regenerative as entirely to transform human society. The *time* and the place of *beginning* are both distinctly marked, and are realized on this day of Pentecost.

4. *This day furnishes the first announcement of a complete gospel of salvation.* All hitherto had been but the *promise* of a salvation yet to be revealed. "The gospel" is declared by Paul to be, in its essential facts, the death of Christ for our sins, His burial, and resurrection from the dead, for our justification. I Cor. xv:1-4. You will see at a glance that *this* gospel, "by which we are saved," as Paul affirms, could not be preached as a perfected gospel until after the resurrection of Jesus. Here, then, we have the *first complete Gospel sermon ever preached in the ears of man. Now* for the first time can it be said, "All things are ready; come to the wedding."

5. *This day is promulgated the first law ever issued in the name of Jesus Christ.* This may startle you. But it is true. The first law ever issued *in the name,* or by the authority, of Jesus Christ, was published on this day, in these words: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Repentance had been commanded before, but not by the authority of Jesus Christ; baptism had been enjoined before, but not in *this* name; remission of sins had been preached before, but not by this authority. *It is a new law of pardon from a new authority.*

6. *This day Peter, for the first time, uses the "keys of the kingdom of heaven,"* Matt. xvi:19, and binds and loosens according to the will of Christ.

Here, therefore, we may learn the terms of entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Why will men puzzle themselves over the enigmatical language of John iii:1-5, and perpetually appeal, for authority, to a private conversation with Nicodemus, at a time when, for many reasons, Jesus veiled his instructions in parables, when we have here the terms of entrance into the kingdom announced *by authority,* in unfigurative terms, in the literal and positive language of law.

7. *The law of pardon announced this day was to be the law of pardon for all nations and all time.*

Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

and that *repentance* and *remission of sins* should be preached in his *name* among all nations, *beginning* at Jerusalem." Luke xxiv:46,47. "*Repent,* and *be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ* for the *remission of sins.*" Acts ii:38. Thus they began at Jerusalem to preach, and thus they were to preach to *all nations,* not only for that age, but for all ages; for the promise to them, in fulfilling this commission, is, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

By Z. T. SWEENEY

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."
—Ps. xix:7.

LAW and order characterize every creation of the Almighty One. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork." We read it however as plainly in the opening flower, the springing grass, and the budding trees. Is it possible then that Infinite Wisdom has made everything with which man holds communion to abound in and be characterized by law, and left the great plan of redemption, whereby man is enlighted, elevated, ennobled and fitted for the courts of a higher life, lawless and orderless? Like a dismantled bark in an angry tempest, to be tossed two and fro by every wind and wave, and at last, forced on the reefs of destruction?

No! Our text states, that there is a *perfect* law for the conversion of the soul. We, as a people, have been characterized by the tenacity with which we have upheld this law before the world, for the last half century.

My purpose here is to set before you this perfect law, in its adaptation to the nature, frailties and necessities of mankind. You will mark the fact, that this expression which forms the text, was predicated of the Old Testament Scriptures; for at the time this was uttered, the Old Testament was the *only law,* that God had revealed to man. But, if this be true of the Old Testament, *"which* was a *shadow of things to come"*; is it not true, with even *greater force* of the *New Testament*—the *verity,* of which, the *old* was a *shadow?* This, we think, no one will deny.

Paul says, in Galatians iii:24, "wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us unto Christ."*

It was a very severe teacher—imperfect, weak through the flesh, exacting conditions that none but Christ ever did fulfill; but notwithstanding this, it served its mission and then was abolished.

If there be any lingering doubt in any mind, of the correctness of the above statement, a careful reading of the third chapter of the Second Corinthian letter in connection with the Epistle to Galatians, will, at once, remove it.

As we, at present, are *"not under the law, but under grace,"* a discussion of the Old Testament is not necessary. However pleasant it might be to study it, as the will of God to the Jews; or to linger with David, as in the Psalms, he tells the experience of all sinners; or to look into the prophetic utterances, concerning the Messiah; yet, as Gentiles, it is

not unto us, "*the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus.*"

Passing then, the Old Testament, we come to a notice of the *new,* as this "perfect law of the Lord, converting the soul."

Did you ever take the time to carefully analyze this wonderful book of God? If so, you have been struck with beauties that are not observed by the surface reader. You take it into your hands and as you linger over its sacred pages, you see at once it is not the work of any one man. It is not a biography, nor a history, but it is *both* and much more.

By studying it closely, you will observe, at its very beginning, *Matthew, Mark, Luke* and *John,* which are very much alike, written to introduce the Hero of the book. They give the plain, unvarnished *facts* of His life, trying to insinuate no prejudice of their own, to prove no doctrine, nor to warp anything he did out of its place in simple biography. Their only object is to tell us who He was and what He did. They take us back to Bethlehem of Judea, where denied room in the inn, He was born in the manger, wrapped in swaddling bands and warmed by the breath of oxen. The ignorant shepherd of Judea, and philosopher of the East, stand upon a level before Him, who is no respector of persons, while the angels sing and the star sparkles with joy over the birth of the world's Redeemer. Our sweetest of American poets has most beautifully described the scene in his "Christmas Carol":

"There's a song in the air,
There's a star in the sky,
There's a mother's deep prayer
And a baby's low cry;
And the star rains its fire
While the beautiful sing;
For the manger of Bethlehem
Cradles a King.

"There's a tumult of joy
O'er the wonderful birth;
For the Virgin's sweet boy
Is Lord of the earth.
Ay! the star rains its fire
While the beautiful sing;
For the manger of Bethlehem
Cradles a King.

"In the light of that star
Lie the ages impearled,
That song from afar
Has swept over the world;
And the Star rains its fire,
While the beautiful sing
In the houses of the nations,
That Jesus is King.

"We rejoice in the light,
We echo the song
That comes down through the night
From the heavenly throng;
We shout to the lovely evangel they bring
And greet in his cradle
Our Saviour and King."

They take us into Egypt with Him as He flees the wrath of an envious king. They bring us again

to His humble Nazarene home, and give us an occasional glimpse of the unfoldings of His wonderful life. They take us to the wilderness of the Jordan where His cousin John, having taken up the prophetic harp of David, that had been hanging so long on the willows, and attuned it rightly, is firing the hearts of "Jerusalem, Judea and all the regions round about Jordan" with the living, burning words of God's message. We see Him bowing in obedience to the righteous institution of baptism, whereby He receives the Holy Spirit, and the word of God bears testimony that He is the Son of God. If God did not acknowledge Him as His Son nor bestow on Him His Holy Spirit till He had learned obedience, think you that He will do more for you than He did for your Saviour?

They take us then, through a three years ministry as He goes "about doing good" unto the sons of men. Placing His finger on the eye of the blind, it opens to the beautiful handiwork of God—on the ear of the deaf, it answers to the calls of nature's sweet harmonies—on the withered limb of the paralytic, it fills with the rushing blood of life. He startles the vaults of death with the cry: "Lazarus come forth," and death yields his icy hold, and the sleeper comes forth to life and friends.

They take us again to the lonely garden of Gethsemane, where He wrestles with temptation in its most powerful form; Jerusalem, with its awful

fate and load of sins hovering darkly over it, sleeps calmly and pleasantly in the still moonlight scene. His disciples, earthly, sensual and ignorant as yet, can sleep. But no sleep ministers to His drooping frame. Wrestling with His baptism of suffering, He crys in agony of soul, "O Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass." With foreseeing eye He beheld the storm-cloud approaching, that was soon to burst in all its fury upon Him. The thunders are charging in heavy squadrons along the mountain clouds that soon are to roll in relentless fury over His head. The air is luminous with quivering bolts of God's justice, that soon shall sink into His bursting heart. Before all this the affrighted humanity in His nature shrinks in dismay. But over this the God-man rules, and soon He bows His head, and the beautiful prayer of submission to the Divine will is heard ascending to God: "Nevertheless, Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

They take us to the rugged cross-tree of Calvary, where the closing scenes in the "Divine Tragedy" are to be enacted. Deserted of God and man, He cries, "My God! why hast thou forsaken me?" He could stand it for a Judas to betray, for a Peter to deny and blaspheme; but the smile of Heaven is now withdrawn. He bowed His head and yielded the spirit.

We are next taken to the new sepulchre of the Arimathean Councillor, where, wrapped in the vestments of the dead, He waits the rising of the blessed

day that shall declare His glorious power over the grave. How calmly He sleeps! He has kept the last Sabbath, endured the last temptation, submitted to the last humiliation, now there awaits only "the glory that shall follow."

As the morning sun rises proudly up the heavens, rolling back the dark curtains of night, suddenly the air is filled with quivering pinions, and the sky is brilliant with their sheen of glory. They hover joyfully over His sleeping place, and while the guards fall back as dead men, before the heavenly vision, two of the brightest and strongest step forth, and breaking the seal of Roman power, He calmly rises as from refreshing sleep, and showing no haste, He deliberately folds the white cerements in which He had been enshrouded and steps out a risen Lord.

They take us still further through forty days of earthly sojourn, in which He confirms by unmistakable testimony, the hopes, and calms the fears of His disciples, till at last, His earthly mission done, He leads them to the summit of Olivet, and is received up into glory, after having promised the Spirit in His place. These four books end here. Beginning as they do, with Jesus, and ending with Jesus, He is in them truly, "the first and the last; the beginning and the end."

A concise analysis of these four books has been presented to us in previous discussions of this subject which, for its clearness, we will re-present. It

clusters all the principal points of interest in these four books around five missions viz.:

1. John the Baptist.
2. Christ's personal mission.
3. The seventy.
4. The Holy Spirit.
5. The apostles.

A correct understanding of these five missions will give us a clear understanding of these books. Let us then, in the language of some good people, "catechise" each one of these missions, and let the scriptures reply.

1. The Mission of John. A. *Who sent you?* Answer: There was a "man sent from God, whose name was John." John i:6. B. *To whom were you sent?* Answer: "Behold I will send you (the Jews) Elijah, the prophet." Mal. iv:5. "This is Elias, which was for to come." Matt. xi:14. C. *For what purpose did you come?* Answer: "The voice of one, crying in the wilderness, saying, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Thus we see that John was sent *from God to the Jews for a certain purpose.* His mission therefore was a Jewish mission, and did not embrace Gentiles, such as we.

2. Christ's Personal Mission. A. *Who sent you?* Answer: "The Father hath sent me." John v:36. B. *To whom were you sent?* Answer: "I am not come, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt. xv:24. C. *For what purpose?*

Answer: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." John xi:46. We learn from the above that Christ, in his personal ministry, was sent *by the Father to the Jews.* Thus, two of the missions have passed, and there are not even crumbs for the Gentiles. This brings us to notice

3. The Mission of the Seventy. By reading Matthew x:5-7, we find: A. They are sent by Christ. B. Forbidden to go to either Gentile or Samaritan, but confined in their preaching to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. C. They were sent to preach the gospel of the coming kingdom.

4. The Mission of the Holy Spirit. A. *Who sent Him?* Answer: "I will send Him." John xvi:7. B. *To whom sent?* Answer: *"To you"* (the Apostles). John xvi. C. *For what purpose?* Answer: "He will guide you into all truth." John xvi:13. "He shall glorify me." John xvi:14.

From the above we see clearly that the Holy Spirit was promised to the apostles to guide them in their proclaiming the Gospel, that they might glorify Christ through the Spirit.

Thus, four out of the five missions mentioned in these four books, have passed away and nothing yet for the world outside of Judaism. Let us approach this last one with prayerful hearts and attentive minds, for if we are not embraced in *it,* there is nothing that does embrace us in the Living Oracles.

5. The Mission of the Twelve Apostles.

The history of this mission is found in the closing chapters of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Pause now and read those chapters before reading further.

Trusting that you have complied with the above request, I will now state: A. The Apostles were sent by the authority of Christ. B. They were sent to "all nations," "every creature," down to the "ends of the world." C. They were sent, not to preach lifeless dogmas over which men should wrangle and divide. In short, they were not to preach dogmas of any kind; but a loving, living PERSON, in whom the world might find rest through faith in His divinity, and obedience to His commands.

We now leave the first four books of the *New Testament* with you, trusting that you have some accurate idea of their purpose and use.

The next book before us is "Acts of Apostles," not "The Acts of the Apostles," as some writers say. It was written by Luke, not to give all the acts of all the apostles, but simply some acts of some apostles. Every book has some central idea which may be called the key to it. If this idea is clearly fixed in our minds we will have no great difficulty in understanding it. If it is *not,* however, all our attempts to understand it will be in vain. We may catch an occasional gleam of light; but it will be as "through a glass darkly." With this idea impressed upon us, we ask what is the key to "Acts of Apostles?" The answer is plain: *Simply to furnish the*

world models of "Apostolic conversions," for imitation in all future ages of the Church. The Pentecostal revival, with the one happening a few days after in Solomon's Porch, are models to which Moody and Sankey, Whittle and Bliss, and all the shilly shally, namby pamby sentimentalists of this age, would do well to give heed.

They could by closely studying these, draw from them lessons of wisdom more precious than gold. The conversions of Cornelius, Saul, the Eunuch of Ethiopia, the Jailor of Philippi and Lydia, are models of what is required of every man in this age. We live in the same age, are governed by the same mental and moral laws. We are fellow heirs of the same promises, on precisely the same conditions. What it took to make them children of God, it will take in your case. Do as they did and your life will be happy, your death triumphant, and your eternity never ending immortal bliss.

But pass briefly over the book of Acts, we come to notice that part of the *New Testament* known commonly as the "Pastoral Epistles." Beginning with Romans and ending with Jude, their main purpose is to set forth to the new converts the "Highway of Holiness"—the straight and narrow path that leads unto life—in which there are many beautiful figures setting forth the Christian's life and walk. We have time for a brief notice of only a few of these metaphors.

1. *A Disciple.* The Christian is often set forth

under the idea of a pupil, scholar, or learner of Christ.

As the scholar, in the schools of this world gives up all other teachers but one, and sits reverently at his feet, listening only to his instructions, obeying only his commands, so we should go to our Teacher, and, disregarding all the babel of tongues around us, sit at His feet, and say as one of old, "speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

"Step by step, step by step,
With many voices crying right and left
Have I climbed back into the primal church
And stand within the porch; and Christ is with me."

2. *A Runner.* "Let us . . . run with patience the race set before us." Heb. xii:1.

The allusion here is to the ancient games, in which the contestants would subject themselves to a very severe disciplinary preparation, often living on the simplest of fare, and going around with heavy weights attached to the feet and other portions of the body. When the day of racing came they would lay aside the weight and enter into the race with bounding zeal. But alas! while the *struggle* was for all, there was a *crown,* only for one. By this figure, the Apostle would teach us that we would lay aside all the clogs that hang around us, and run the Christian race, which differs from others, in that, there is a crown for every one that "endureth to the end."

3. *A Soldier.* But the most beautiful figure of

all is that of a soldier. The iron-clad soldiers of Rome stood sentinel at every gate and portal in the whole world.

There were none who were unacquainted with the soldiers of Rome, their modes of life and implements of warfare. The Apostle, in the sixth chapter of the Ephesian letter, sets forth the armor of the Christian soldier as typified by the armor of a Roman. He says: "*Having your loins girt about with truth.*" In their long marches, the soldiers would likely weary, and as a protection, they girt their loins about with a belt. So my brethren we will have long marches and sandy deserts of temptation. Are your loins girded with truth? Do you *speak, act,* LIVE the truth? "If the truth shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

Again: "*Having on the breastplate of righteousness.*" The Roman soldier was given a plate, made sometimes of brass, sometimes of hard wood, covered with the tough hide of an animal, as a covering for his breast. They never gave him any back plate. They considered that if he should turn his back upon the enemy, he was unworthy of Roman protection. In furnishing the Christian armor we are given righteousness as a breastplate. In other words, we are to live so righteously in the sight of man, as to disarm all the envenomed shafts of the evil one.

We should live so high that no one can throw dirt and filth into our homes. In olden times, in

England, they hunted birds with a falcon or hunting hawk. The hawk had a crown buckled on the top of his head to which was fastened a keen blade. He was trained to fly up above the bird, and coming swiftly down, would drive the blade through its prey. The little birds at last learned its method of attack, and when they saw a hawk, would always fly up and keep above the hawk. So brethren, we should always keep above the hawks of envy, slander, etc. Christ, like the Roman government, *furnishes no back plate.*

Again: *"Your feet shod with a preparation of the gospel of peace."* They often formed their ambuscades then, as have been done in later times. Their manner of procedure was as follows: Proceeding to what they supposed the battle ground would be, they would drive down stakes, sharpen them, and cover them with grass, leaves, etc. Then making roads through it, with which their own troops would be made acquainted, they would advance in front of this prepared place and give battle. As soon as they had brought on a general engagement they would fall back, through the paths known to themselves, and the enemy flushed with what they supposed to be victory, would rush on and stumbling over the sharp pegs would be surrounded and either captured or destroyed. In order to prevent this, the Romans supplied their soldiers with greaves or boots, with brazen soles. Being shod in this manner they could walk among these dangers and receive no harm.

Brethren and sisters, we are fighting an enemy that has ambuscades spread all round our pathway. He knows us better than we know ourselves. He has been fighting with humanity for six thousand years and he knows how easy it is for the feet to wander. How often do I fear, when I see my young brother or sister wending their way to the house of dancing, where God, Christ, and religion never go, that Satan is leading them into an ambush. Or, when I see my brother going down behind the green blinds, on the sanded floor, where I hear the clinking of glasses, the blasphemies of the profane and the driveling song of the inebriate, I feel like I must sound in his ear the warning cry: "Beware, my brother; for thy soul is in danger." You are stepping into Satan's ambush. Now the remedy for this is to have our "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." Then they will lead us in wisdom ways, whose ways are pleasantness, and whose paths are peace.

Again: *"Above all (or over all) taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."*

The soldiers' shield was a large piece of brass worn on the left arm, that could be interposed between the body and any missile that might be hurled at it, thus "quenching" it. We are surrounded by fiery darts of temptation in all the battle of life, and we need hope to come out of the battle unscathed, only by a constant use of the shield of faith. The

great defect of the church today, is the lack of faith. We have plenty of faith, but it is not exercised on the proper objects. We do not feel as deeply as we should that God is in us, through us, and above us, in all that we do.

"And take the helmet of Salvation." The helmet in those days, was an iron cap, with a large crest waving above it. If in their hand to hand conflicts, with a sword or battle axe, a blow be aimed at the head, it would glance off and the head would suffer no danger of being cleft by the blow. As Christians, we are to take as our helmet, "the hope of salvation," for so it is expressed in another place. I Thess. x:8. A well grounded hope is the firmest rock upon which we can build.

In another part of the Scripture, it is likened to an anchor—sure and steadfast. Any one who has been tossed on an angry sea, in danger of being wrecked, knows the feeling of security experienced when the Captain gives the command, the capstain creaks, and you hear the clanking of the chain, and feel the huge anchor grapple with the rock, and know that the vessel is riding the waves at anchor. So with us in life's tempest; driven up and down by sin and persecution, how sweet to think we have an anchor which has grappled the everlasting hills; and though storms may rage and clouds may gather, yet

"We will weather the blast
And land at last,
Safe on the evergreen shore."

"And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Hitherto you will perceive that Paul has been furnishing the Christian with only defensive weapons. With that, by means of which to repel the assaults of the enemy. But the Christian life is not *all defensive,* but it is also *offensive.* "The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God to the *pulling down of strongholds."*

Christianity is represented by Daniel as a little stone, which smote the great image and scattered its fragments, "as the chaff of the summer threshing floor." This could not be accomplished without offensive weapons; hence the last thing committed to us is the sword of God's word. This is the only weapon that has ever been successful in really building up the Church and pulling down the strongholds of Satan. But alas! it is becoming so rusty in the hands of many Christians that it is hardly of any value.

When the "current Reformation" started, fifty years ago, to restore the neglected and broken altars of Apostolic Christianity, it was their boast that they were a Bible people. They carried their Bibles with them and read them forsooth! But we have become rich and strong and *"orthodox,"* and are clamoring in many places for our gods, "as do the heathen," and the Bible is becoming more and more neglected. Do you remember the downfall of Samson? As long as he kept his Nazarite locks, they were to him an arm of strength. But so soon as shorn of them, he was

captured and made the sport of his enemies. What his locks were to him, the Word of God is to the Christian. So long as he wields it aright he is unconquerable; but the moment he is shorn of its power, that moment he is led captive at the will of his enemies. There is a little legend of the olden time, of a warrior, who received a sword of supernatural power, a gift of the gods. He was told that if he always honored it he should at death be carried to the Elysium of his faith. He made it his bosom companion all the life journey, and many a doughty knight bit the dust under its powerful stroke.

At last it came his time to die. His life flowed out with the evening tide. And as the western sun was setting, he bade one of his aids to take the sword and return it to the gods, as they had directed. He took it to a huge beetling cliff, that overhung the foaming sea, and, holding it aloft a moment, threw it far out over the waves. Higher and higher it went, whirling round and round, reflecting the sunlight from its bright sides, and then it began to sink lower and lower, and just as it reached the crested waters, a huge brawny arm reached up, grasped it, and waved it three times and drew it down. The news was conveyed to the dying warrior, and, knowing by the signal that he had been faithful to his trust, he sweetly slept the sleep that knows no waking.

The moral is plain. God has given to us the sword of the Spirit, and with the gift, a solemn

responsibility to use it aright. Shall we not learn a lesson from the dying warrior, and so keep the faith that we may have his consolation in the dying hour? Or, shall it be said of us, as it was of the servant who hid his talent, "bind him and cast him into outer darkness?"

"*Praying always with all prayer and supplication.*" By this the Apostle would remind that all our sufficiency is of God. While to us is committed these weapons, and of us it is expected that we should use them, we should never go forth to battle without asking the God of our fathers to be with us and bless us.

> "Restraining prayer, we cease to fight
> Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright
> And Satan trembles, when he sees
> The weakest saint upon his knees."

Let us, my brethren and sisters, *fight* on and *pray* on, and may we, if we should live till then, be found praying, when the angel shall stand on the land and deep, and swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that time shall be no longer.

But we must hasten to the last part of this law of the Lord. We would say in passing, that there is one book (Acts of Apostles) telling us how to become Christians, and *twenty-one* written to inform us how to live Christians. We should feel that in becoming Christians we have only entered the low water mark of salvation. That it is now our duty as *disciples* to *learn,* as *racers* to *run,* and as *soldiers* to *fight.*

We now come to the last division of this law of the Lord. It is the book of Revelation. An old author has likened it to a great river, in which there are deep and mighty pools in which the monsters of the sea may dive and revel to their heart's content, and find no bottom; but it gently meanders down to a little ripple, in which the lambs and children may play and find no harm nor danger.

I think it is one of the most beautiful metaphors I ever saw. In this book we find deep pools of mystery, in which the most gifted intellects and philanthropic hearts that have ever adorned our common humanity, may dive to their heart's content, and find no bottom. It is fathomless to any *human* soundings. And yet it gently meanders down to the beautiful ripple of "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates, into the city."

And if faithful to what I can know of it here, and am permitted to rest beneath the Tree of Life, and pluck from its emerald branches the food of immortal spirits; perhaps I shall have explained to me the wonderful imagery of which I now know so little. Thus we have walked along the course of the *New Testament*, and have endeavored to explain its meaning. We have found Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were written to tell us of the Saviour; Acts of Apostles to present the way to the Saviour; the Epistles to keep us in the company of the Saviour,

while on earth, and Revelation to assure us of eternal society with the Saviour

> "When our earthly life is ended,
> When our earthly mission's done."

And in conclusion, we wish to show you how beautifully this "law of the Lord" is adapted to the nature of man. For illustration, take a little boy whose mind is beginning to put forth the buds of thought, concerning the great problems of life, duty and destiny. Place the *New Testament* into his hands and what is of most interest to him? Does he turn to Revelation, or bother his brains about Christian casuistry as developed in the Epistles? Certainly not. But turning to the histories of our Saviour's life, he drinks in eagerly the *facts* of the *New Testament*, and when by reading them, he has become versed in these facts, like honest young Saul, he cries aloud, "*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do.*" Then follows immediately the book of Acts answering the questions of his heart. Now, having found peace of conscience through faith and obedience, he asks again, "How shall I live so that God may be honored, Christ glorified and humanity benefited by my life? That I may say with Paul, 'For me to live is Christ.'"

Then following the book of Acts come the Epistles, answering this question; bidding him "walk worthy of his vocation," "run with patience," "continue instant in season," "examine himself,"

prove himself, etc. At last, when he shall have done all this, and life is nearly over, standing by the lichens that border death's cold river, trembling with the burden of years, he asks, "Oh, what is there for me in yonder world, to which I am rapidly passing." Then comes the book of Revelation, and wreathing around the grave the beautiful Rainbow of Hope, points through the Gates of Pearl, to the singers of the Heavenly Choir that are "singing the song of Moses and the Lamb."

May God grant, that we may so live, as to honor Him here, and when death's clouds are driving over our souls, and life's shadows are growing dimmer and dimmer—

> "Then from out the gathering darkness
> Holy, deathless stars, shall rise,
> By whose light our souls will gladly
> Tread their pathway to the skies."

THE SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN CHRIST

By JOHN S. SWEENEY

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." II Cor. xi:3.

IN making our estimate of the Gospel, if we would be well guided, there are two or three things we should constantly hold in mind.

1. That it is the power of God for saving men from sin. This is simply a Scripture statement, and needs not to be argued. Paul says, Rom. i:16, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." It is the power by which God proposes to save Jews and Gentiles individually. That's the meaning of "every one." It is distributive. It means the Gospel is the power of God to save each individual of the race. It is God's power as method and as means. And if He will ever save any one by any other means, He has not revealed to us His intention to do so, and we cannot therefore know the fact. The Gospel is the only means known to men and the only

means we can have anything to do with, for the salvation of men from sin.

2. Our Saviour, when he had done the necessary preparatory work he had to do in his own personal ministry, gave Commission and Commandment to his disciples to "preach the gospel to every creature." Mark xvi:16. They were not to preach the gospel to kings, or governors, or priests, for the people; but to every individual. Every creature means the whole creations individually, distributively. Now, he knew the capacity of men; what they were capable and what they were incapable of understanding. He knew the ignorance of men generally and particularly; their incapability of grappling with and comprehending profound and abstruse questions, of law, of philosophy, of science, of theology. And yet he commanded his disciples to preach the *gospel* to every creature.

3. We should also observe the fact that when his disciples went forth to preach the gospel, when they preached it and where they preached it, the people did on hearing a single presentation of it, understand it so far as it was necessary that they should, and believe and obey it, and did receive and enjoy the salvation it brought; in some instances hundreds and possibly thousands in a single day; in some instances on the public highway; sometimes at midnight; they heard a single presentation of the Gospel, understood, believed and obeyed it, and rejoiced in its salvation the same day, and even the same hour

of the night. All this we learn from Acts of Apostles.

From these facts, unquestionable as facts, there comes to my mind, with irresistible force, this conclusion: The Gospel of Christ, preached by the first disciples, was a very simple something; something suited well to the capacity of the people, the unlearned as well as the learned; something they could readily understand and receive. Is not the conclusion a necessary one, from the facts named? Not only so, but it seems to me eminently reasonable that it should be so. There are questions of philosophy, questions of science and questions of moral casuistry that are very profound, very abstruse, and even mysterious; quite enough for the greatest intellectual exercise and highest culture, and severest mental training of men and women; enough so for their life-long intellectual development. And this seems to me well and wisely so.

It seems to me to be right that there should be questions for men and women to study and work on for generations. This is necessary for the intellectual and moral development of men and women. God has made wise provision for us thus in the constitution of nature and its adjustments to the wants of our nature. There are many questions one may study all his life and even then know comparatively little about them. But the Gospel of Christ is not one of these. It was not intended to be of such a character. It is God's appointed means of salvation from sin, and the sinner is not required to carry

his soul burdened with sin, and his conscience with guilt, through a lifetime, because he is unable to understand and appreciate the means of relief.

While I do not believe the popular doctrine of total depravity, yet I must confess that there is a perverseness about human nature in all its individualizations with which I have had to do, or of which I have had much knowledge; a sort of proneness to be contrary and to go wrong. Almost all men and women seem more disposed to know what they can not and ought not to know than to know what they can and ought to know. Hence it is that almost all men and women have a fondness for finding out secrets, for fathoming mysteries, for seeking after impracticable knowledge, for knowing unrevealed and unknowable things; as if such things were of greater value and importance than the simple things that may and ought to be known and understood. Many seem more disposed to know all that other people know, and to attend to other people's business, than to find out what they ought to know and to attend to their own business. They would always rather know what God has not revealed than to study and profit by what He has revealed. They think all wisdom comes from afar, clothed in clouds and mist. We are slow to believe that a man is really wise or great whom we have known all our lives, and just because we have so known him; but one coming from afar, of whom we know nothing, he may be great and wise, and just because we know nothing about him.

And just so about doing, as well as about knowing. Men are disposed to do what they can not and ought not to do rather than what they can and ought to do.

A few years ago the people nearly all went wild over the hypothesis of evolution. It seemed to many people full of beauty, wisdom and importance, just because they knew nothing about it, and nobody could know anything about it. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and "created man in his own image," are statements that have very little beauty or wisdom in them for some people, just because they are revealed things, and can be understood tolerably well.

Of course we lay all this perverseness and contrariness in our natures to the fall in Adam. I do not desire especially to be heterodox, any more than I would go out of my way to be called orthodox, but I have not a single doubt about the fact that we have laid entirely too much on Adam and Eve. We ought to practice quitting it awhile. It is not magnanimous. It is cowardly. Besides, we cannot get rid of all our sins in that way, and should not try to.

The crookedness in our nature, of which I have been speaking, is traceable beyond the "fall," as we call the sin of our foreparents. Our mother Eve had it before she ate the forbidden fruit. It was here she tripped, just as here thousands of women have tripped since—and men, too—I mean no cowardice. It is contemptible. Let us see how it was: "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely

die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil; and when the woman (thought she) saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise she took of the fruit thereof and did eat." There it is! the whole story! The woman thought it better to "be as gods" than to be simply a woman; better to know what "God doth know" than to know what he had revealed; better to "eat" what was forbidden than what was permitted; better to have her "eyes opened" to the forbidden than to behold all the beauties of Paradise; and she went wrong. Paul knew this weakness and perverseness of our nature, and he knew also the cunning of the serpent, and hence his well grounded fear: "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

But let me not be misunderstood. When I contend that the Gospel of Christ is very simple, and brought down to the capacity of all responsible persons; so that the unlearned, as well as the learned, may understand it so far as it is necessary that they should, and believe it, and obey it, and be saved from their sins, I do not mean that there are no mysteries in the Bible, or even none in the Gospel itself. Certainly not. On the contrary, I am free to say that there are a great many things in the Bible I have never been able to understand; mysteries I have

never been able to fathom. To me there are some mysteries about the gospel that I have about concluded I shall never understand in this life, and probably not fully in the life to come. This is especially true as to the *reason* of things.

There are in the Bible seeming discrepancies; even things that, with all the light and knowledge I have, look like contradictions. There are things God is said to have done, and commanded to be done, that if they are right according to our commonly received standards, I am unable to prove it to the satisfaction of objectors, or even to my own satisfaction. I don't doubt that they are right. I believe they are. But I believe it because God did or commanded them, and not because I see their rightness myself. There are curious persons of little knowledge who suppose that if they can find something in the Bible that the preacher can not explain to everybody's satisfaction, they have accomplished something very wonderful, and set up a sufficient excuse for rejecting the Book altogether. But this is a prodigious mistake. We should not expect to be able to understand all the ways of God; to be able to see the reason in His mind for all He does, or even for all He commands us to do. No doubt there is in His mind a good reason for all He says and does, whether recorded in the Bible or in nature; but it is certain that we cannot, in all cases, see the reason. Our scope of vision is very much limited as compared with the infinite. God does everything He does, and

orders everything He orders, in full view of and with reference to everything else in the whole universe, in all time and eternity. If we could take so much within our visual plane, then we might see the reason for all He does.

God is necessarily a mystery to us, just as a man is a mystery to a little child, and for the same reason. A child cannot comprehend the reasons that may be in the mind of a man for his conduct. The wisest ways of a parent are often mysteries to his own child, just because the parent sees more than the child can see, as a child. Were this not so, a child would not need parental government. If it could comprehend all the reasons in the mind of the parent, it could just as well govern itself. The larger scope and superior knowledge of the parent is the ground and reason for the faith in him on the part of the child. Just so, and more so, is it necessary that men should walk by faith in reference to God. He is infinite, we finite. He governs all worlds, we cannot govern one—or a state, or a county, or a city, or ourselves, or even our tongues. And shall we demand a reason that we can see for all He does or commands? Preposterous! impudent! wicked!

Men do not require so much of God in nature. We do not understand nature any better than we do the Bible. It is full of mysteries even to the wisest men. Why God created nature as He did? Why this and that law? Why He governs as He does? These are questions we can never answer, even to

our own satisfaction. If we could create and equip and stock a world, and were going to do it, we would beyond doubt leave out a great many things we find in this, with our present knowledge; yet I have no idea that, on the whole, our effort would result in an improvement upon the world we have. None of us believes we could successfully run this world if the reins were given into our hands. We would wreck it.

What we call nature, then, and the Bible, are very like each other in that they are both full of mysteries to men. We cannot know a great deal, it is true, but we can and ought to be consistent, and we must be if we would convince even ourselves that we are honest. We ought not to accept nature as it is, without complaint, and fall in love with its laws, and get a living out of it, full of mysteries as it is; and then turn about and demand that there shall be no mysteries in the Bible, another book by the same author, or we will reject it. We ought to deal fairly with the Bible. If it be of God, mysteries in it are to be expected. In fact, it may be said they are a necessity, because He is infinite and His ways are past finding out to the finite mind.

I remember once on my way to Texas falling in with a very spritely and very loquacious Secularist, I think he called himself. There were some fifteen or twenty of us on the same palace coach all the way from St. Louis into Texas. Our Secularist friend was a great reasoner, as nearly all skeptics are. He seemed very determined in his mind on demolishing

the Bible, and very zealous in his work; much surprised that someone had not turned aside to brush it out of the way of thinking people long ago. He attacked nearly every one on the coach. In fact he bored us. The discrepancies, contradictions, and horrid inhumanities of the Bible, made up his theme. Most of the passengers avoided him. It is well to avoid such persons, as a general thing. There is not much to be made by reasoning with them. It is not the remedy for their ailment. An epidemic of cholera or yellow fever will reach their cases quicker, as these strike them where they live. But our friend kept up the fire.

Now, there was a poor consumptive aboard, going South for a pinch of life, as most people do in that condition. We all sympathized with him, and gave him constant little attentions, as people generally will do in Christian countries. But, in course of time, our skeptical friend attacked the poor, sick man, and was coming down on his Bible, which the sick man had with him, with a torrent of emphasis. I remember he read from the Bible the passage in which God said to Saul, "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass"; and, when he had read this, he slammed the book with one hand against his other hand with a great noise and much seeming indignation, denouncing the passage as "unworthy of God or civilized man."

I was not far from him, and my mouth went off. I couldn't help it. I asked him what he knew about God, and where he got his information. He was ready. Nature was his book, he said, loudly, and the only book that reveals God. Now just a few days before, there had been a great earthquake somewhere east, that had ruined a considerable city, swallowing up, of course, "both man and woman, infant and suckling"; and we had hardly got done reading about it. Of course I thought of it, and, of course, called his attention to it, and wanted to know if that was his God, and if it didn't look a great deal like smiting the Amalekites—"man and woman, infant and suckling."

And from this I went on to notice a good many other things in nature that seem hard, and inconsistent, and contradictory, and mysterious, just like things in the Bible; and insisted that he should try his hand on these passages in his Bible. I pressed, and he faltered. Of course he did. That was not the kind of work he was best at. Skeptics are generally better at finding fault with things than in explaining things; better at destruction than construction—and I have known even some Christians so. In fact, it is easier work for anybody.

I plied him with the difficult passages in his book until he got to fretting so in the harness I had to quit. But I have related this incident to show that there are as great difficulties about explaining the mysteries of the book of nature as the mysteries of

the other Book. No doubt earthquakes, cyclones and other natural occurrences that destroy property and kill "both man and woman, infant and suckling," are all right and necessary in their times and places, and that there are reasons for them though we may not always be able to show the reasons. They are often too deep, or too high, for us. They are clean out of our scope of vision. No doubt there was wisdom in and a reason for smiting the Amalekites, "man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and ass," though we may not be able to make all men see them especially unwilling men, or even to see them for ourselves. There was a reason for it within the scope of the infinite, though we may not reach it for several billions of years yet. We explore the universe slowly.

It seems never to have occurred to some people that where in the works of God they can see no reason it is because of their short-sightedness. But they think that where they can *see* no reason there is none! What a wonderful being is man, specially in his own estimation, and more especially if he only has a trifle of skepticism about him!

There is another important respect in which the Bible and nature are alike. While, as we have seen, they both have mysteries in them, they both have a simple side. In each case the side of mysteries is God's side, and the simple side is man's. Of course that is just as it should be. There are no mysteries to God; and man is the simple party, though, it must

be granted, that some men are so wise in their own conceit, as not always to see it that way.

Who understands perfectly the simplest of what we call the sciences? For example, who understands the science of agriculture, the most practical of them all? Of course there are many who know a good deal about it, and all of us know more or less about it; but that is not the question: Who understands it perfectly? Who can explain all its facts and phenomena? Who can fathom all its mysteries? Well, the fact is, that nobody will profess thus to understand it—unless it be possibly some young man recently pulled or paid through a scientific course. Who can tell why the same grain and grass and water will produce wool on a sheep, hair on a pig and feathers on a goose? Oh! it is something in the nature of the animal, one may say. Correct. But what is that something in the nature of the animal? All the animals are made of pretty nearly the same material, are they not? Then why the difference? There we stop. There we have to stop. It is enough for my purpose to say what has to be admitted, that one side of even the most practical of the sciences is mysterious all along the line. But then there is a simple side also.

The old negro that doesn't know one letter of the alphabet from another—that couldn't say agriculture tomorrow, after hearing it said a half dozen times today, if a fortune depended upon it—that old negro can plow and plant, sow and reap, thresh and

grind, cook and eat, and live. He can know enough of the simple side of nature, the side God has turned toward us to catch on and get a living out of it; and he has sense enough to do so too, without bothering his head greatly about the other side, the upper side, the side of mysteries, God's side. He can plow and plant, and let God make to grow. And so we all have to do. Who is so silly as to refuse to sow until someone explains to him all the mysteries of germination, growth, and production? We have all found out that we can run the simple side in nature, while God runs the other side—we the lower side and He the upper side—and thus out of the co-operation we get our living.

Then, again, we all know how to eat. That's one little matter in the essentials of which men generally agree. We all eat, the learned and the unlearned, black and white, male and female. Even the greatest cranks eat. One side of that matter is very simple, though so important in the building up and the sustenance of our bodies. But who understands the other side even of the simple science of eating? Who understands all about how it is that what we eat is digested, distributed and assimilated, so as to build up in equal and proper proportions all the parts of an animal body? Portions of what we eat go to make bones; other portions, muscle; and other portions, veins; and other parts, blood; other parts, skin—white, black, red. Other portions, hair—black hair, brown hair, red hair—other por-

tions make ears; others parts, eyes—black, brown, blue, gray—others portions still, make brains, more or less, and of different degrees of fineness of texture!

Who understands all this? Who can explain all the mysteries of this wonderful work? Of course we may and we ought to learn much about this wonderful work of God in building our bodies. But there are many things about it we are not very likely ever to know, and that it is not essential we ever should know. On the other hand, our side of the matter, the side we have to see and to operate, is so very simple in its essential particulars, that the unlearned almost as well as the learned can work it. And, by the way, it is a noticeable fact that often, if not generally, the unlettered negro succeeds in making, in many fundamental respects, a sounder and stronger body than does the most scientific man or woman—better stomachs, and eyes and teeth. Especially does he have better success than most hygienic cranks.

But, now, who is so silly as to refuse to eat until someone explains to his satisfaction and comprehension, all the mysteries of body-making; and, then, all about the connection between bodies and spirits? Such a person would be apt to starve out, would he not? All of us eat; spiritualists and materialists, evolutionists and creationists, educated and uneducated—all eat, and without waiting to understand all about both sides of the business of body-making.

All this is true, and all this I mean to say, without in the least disparaging education, or the deepest possible scientific research.

Now all I have said of nature, and body-building and sustenance, is just as true of the Bible, and of soul-building and sustenance. Here, too, we have simplicity on one side, the under side, our side; and mystery on the other side, the upper side, God's side. All that men have to do or see to in the matter of their soul's salvation here and hereafter, is all so simple that any responsible person can understand it.

1. What mystery is there about faith? Believing is one of the most natural and one of the most common things men ever do. We believe from childhood to the grave. We pull up out of the cradle, and on to manhood, by faith. Nor is there anything mysterious about believing in *Jesus Christ.* He came to us in our nature, a babe, a boy, a man; eating, drinking, sleeping; hungry, thirsty, weary; joyful and sorrowful; making wine at a marriage and weeping at the grave, having the experiences of life in common with us. He came as close to us as we can get to one another; came alongside of us, in all our sad and sorrowful experiences; tasting sorrow and grief, suffering and death, as we do, and because we do. He died for us. God raised Him up and exalted Him to His own right hand in heaven, where He lives for us. What is more simple and more reasonable than that we should believe in Him? The

wonder is that any poor sinner who ever heard of Him should not believe in Him, and love Him.

2. What is more simple than *repentance?* Every one, anywhere between childhood and old age, knows what it is. There is no experience we know better.

3. How simple and reasonable that we should openly *confess* Jesus Christ. We all understand confession. Children know what it is and even know something of its philosophy. But we do not *have* to know its philosophy. It is our duty, our privilege, to confess Him before men, and how it is that in confessing Him we make all the confession God requires of us as sinners, we may not understand, but so it is; and how simple it is.

4. We can be baptized in His name. That, too, is a most simple thing. All who are capable of obedience at all can do that. We are not required to understand all about the reason or the philosophy of it, but simply to be baptized in His name and because He bids us do it.

5. And then a life of faith, hope, love, obedience, prayer and trust in Him is the simplest, easiest, happiest life one can live on earth; ever learning of Him, and leaving out of our lives what He forbids, and taking into them what He bids, as best we can, trusting Him for all the rest—that's all. We may not understand just how God answers prayer. We do not have to. Nor do we have to understand how He works in us by His Spirit, in the use of the means He has appointed and furnished, to build us up and

sustain us spiritually, any more than we have to understand how He makes our bodies to grow, and sustains them. We have only to learn and do our duty, as in nature, and He will do all the rest for us as He does in nature. There are many questions about which we give ourselves needless trouble; such as how God answers prayer, how He works in us to make us grow, how He will raise the dead, how He will judge the world, how He will make us happy in heaven? All this is His side of the work, and it will be done in greater love and wisdom than we can conceive.

And this is "the simplicity that is in Christ." But what has he who "beguiled Eve by his subtility" been doing since the apostle expressed his "fear" as in our text? Was Paul's "fear" groundless, or well grounded? Has not the enemy been trying to corrupt our minds from this simplicity in Christ? Has he not been trying to pervert our minds from what is revealed, and send us off after what "*God doth know?*" Has he not in a large measure succeeded in shutting men's eyes to a simple life of obedience and trust, and opening them to the mysteries of the Godhead, and the mysteries of God's side of the work of our redemption? Men have been led to suppose that it is all important that they should understand all about the trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead; and that there is vastly more wisdom and religion in such a statement as that there is "God the Father, God the Son, and

God the Holy Ghost; yet not three Gods, but one God, for there is unity in trinity and trinity in unity,'' than in all the simple statements of Jesus and the apostles. Also that it is all important that they should know all about the ''foreknowledge,'' ''secret counsel'' and decrees of God; as well as just how God and Christ and the Holy Spirit dwell in men and work in them.

Many have gotten clean over on God's side of the business of saving souls, and are fighting above the clouds, or at least in the clouds. Preachers have taken the lead and the people have followed them away from the simplicity of duty and trust into the mysteries and mazes of speculations about the Godhead and the divine methods. About all the difficulties with which men are tussling, as well as the objections men urge against Christianity, as excuses for not doing their duty, are brought over from the upper side, the God side, of the question; and not from the side God presents to us, the side of human duty.

Men have allowed the devil to practice a huge fraud upon them, to make them act inconsistently and foolishly, and to pass judgment of condemnation upon themselves; as well as to open up such vast fields of theology to be studied, that it takes people a whole life-time to learn how to become Christians, and many never learn the lesson.

Now, here is the inconsistency. Men do not deal with God in nature, as they do with Him in the

Bible. They do not deal with their pockets and stomachs as they do with their souls. When asked to obey the Gospel of Christ, they will at once fall back upon foreknowledge and divine decrees; will tell you that God foreknew all things that do, or ever will, come to pass; that the end was present with Him from the beginning; that He foreknew whether they will be saved or lost; that if He foreknew that they will be saved nothing can hinder it; if He foreknew that they will be lost, they will be lost; that, in a word, they can do nothing to change what God foresaw from all eternity; that He foresaw all things that come to pass, from all eternity, and that therefore there is nothing they can do in the matter; they are afraid to attempt to do anything lest they might be found fighting against the divine decrees. But when it comes to questions about the body—about the pocket and the stomach, the very same men act quite differently, and it is presumable that they reason differently, if they reason at all. They look after the wants of the stomach and of the body generally, notwithstanding the end was present with God from the beginning. They work, provide, and eat, notwithstanding God knew from all eternity whether they would starve or have plenty.

There are men in this country—growing scarcer as the years go by—who preach foreknowledge and foreordination, and man's utter inability to do anything in the matter of his soul's salvation, parting their hair in the middle that they may stand plumb

on this line: and after so preaching all day Sunday, will go home on Monday and go to work, and put all hands to it, to provide for the wants of the body! Why this inconsistency? Is it because men will not hear the enemy when their stomachs pinch them? Or is it because they do not consider him orthodox on questions about the body? Or, is it because he is willing to allow men to feed and pamper the body, provided only that they will neglect the soul?

The problem of God's sovereignty and man's free agency is one that most likely we shall never be able to solve to the satisfaction of all. It is logically and theologically an impossibility, there being in the problem too much that is unknown and unknowable. In temporal matters almost all men are content to exercise their free agency and refer the matter of sovereignty to God Himself. This is the best we can do. But we should be consistent, and in spiritual as well as in temporal matters use our free agency, and refer the matter of sovereignty, and the harmony of the two to God. This side is ours. That side is His. In doing thus we may return to "the simplicity that is in Christ," as preached by the inspired apostles and acted upon by the first disciples. And may God help us.

SOURCE OF AUTHORITY IN CHRISTIANITY

By Z. T. SWEENEY

Matt. xxviii: 18.

A SUBJECT is half argued when it is clearly stated. I wish on the threshold of my address to state my subject in the clearest possible term. I shall do this by both exclusion and inclusion.

Exclusion

1. It does not come within the purview of my paper to discuss the source of authority in *religion*. That would compel me to discuss the various religions of the world with their various standards of authority.

2. Neither is it my purpose to discuss the source of authority in the different dispensations in the Bible. Patriarchism and Mosaism have expired by limitation and their authority expired with them.

3. Nor is it my purpose to discuss the source of authority in ecclesiasticism. There is a world of difference between Christianity and ecclesiasticism.

4. Nor is it my purpose to discuss the interpreta-

tion of Scripture. Interpretation is a process by which we arrive at the meaning of a message; authority is the power to command and enforce obedience to a message.

Authority *precedes* the giving of a message; interpretation *follows* the giving of the message. Two men may believe implicitly in the authority of a message, and yet differ widely as to its meaning. A notable illustration of this occurred in Lexington, Ky., years ago, when Nathan L. Rice and Alexander Campbell differed widely in interpreting the Scriptures, but vied with each other in adhering to the authority of them. This clearly evidences that interpretation is one thing and authority is another.

Inclusion

It is my purpose to discuss the source of authority in the system we call Christianity. If there be any authority in Christianity, its source must inhere in the system. It must carry its credentials in its own bosom. What, then, is the source of authority which Christianity claims for itself? That is the subject I propose to discuss.

It is very evident that the only authority that can exist in the system of Christianity is objective authority. Subjective authority can not exist in a body or organization or community of men. It is unthinkable—for illustration—that subjective authority could exist in the Constitution of the United States.

In order that we may profitably study the source of authority in Christianity, we must have clear-cut definitions of both "Christianity" and "authority."

I. What, Then, Is Christianity?

The *Standard Dictionary* defines Christianity as "the doctrines and teachings of Jesus Christ."

Webster's New Unabridged gives it as "the system of doctrines and precepts taught by Christ."

Both are defective in that they make Christ's teachings plural rather than singular. The Bible speaks of the doctrines of men and the doctrines of devils, but the references to the teaching of Christ are in the singular number. It is a unit. For the purposes of this paper Christianity is the system of teaching and life taught by Jesus Christ and His apostles.

He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginner and finisher of the faith. Christianity at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him. No matter from what angle we may view it, this is true.

1. *It is a system of teaching or doctrine.* As such it centers in and around Christ as the teacher. "We know that thou art a teacher come from God." "And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues." "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you."

2. *It is also represented as a law.* As such it centers in and around Christ as the lawgiver. "For

the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death." Rom. 8:2. "For he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law." Rom. 13:10. "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." Gal. 6:2.

3. *Again, it is represented as a kingdom.* As such it centers in and around Christ as the king. "That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." "Now is my kingdom not from hence." John 18:36.

4. *Again, it is represented as a life.* As such it centers in and around Christ as the model life. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." John 1:4. "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory." Col. 3:4. "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps." I Pet. 2:21. He is the teacher of the teaching, the lawgiver of the law, the king of the kingdom and the model of the life.

From the above induction, we conclude that Christ is to Christianity what the sun is to the solar system. It stands or falls with Him, If He is human. If He is divine, Christianity is divine. If Christ rose from the dead, He is divine. The *great fact* of Christianity is the resurrection of Christ. This supports the *great truth* of Christianity that He is "the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Christianity, then, is the system of teaching and life taught by Jesus Christ and His apostles.

II. What Is Authority?

Authority is defined by the *Standard Dictionary* to be: "The right to command and enforce obedience; the right to act by virtue of office, station or relation; as, the authority of parent over child; the authority of an officer." Authority is of two kinds. First: *Primary authority,* which grows out of the relation of those who have the right to command and those whose duty it is to obey. Second: *Delegated authority.* This is the right to command and enforce obedience which can be given to another by the party holding primary authority. The fountain of all primary authority in Christianity is God. We are His and He made us; we are the creatures of His hand and the product of His intelligence. He is our Maker, our Preserver and our bountiful Benefactor, and has, therefore, the absolute right to command, and it is our absolute duty to obey. But our heavenly Father has rarely seen fit to govern men by His personal and primary authority. He has delegated that authority to others, and rules by His representatives.

Delegated Authority

In considering delegated authority, the first delegation in Christianity was from the Father to the Son, as will be seen from the following Scriptures. Heb. 1:1: "God, who at sundry times and in divers

manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." The Son Himself says: "The word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me." "No man knoweth who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." And the Son closes His life on earth, and prefaces His great commission to the apostles, with the statement: "All power in heaven and in earth is *given unto me.*"

The Son stands nearest the Father in delegated authority. He is the "brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person." "It hath pleased the Father that in him all fullness should dwell;" and when the Father acknowledged Him after His baptism, He said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He was not only the delegate of God on earth, but He is the "image of the invisible God," and He said to His doubting disciples, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

The traveler who stands on the banks of Lake Geneva, and looks at the snowcapped mountain peaks that stand guard over the little lake, is often dazzled with the brightness of the sun's reflection from their summits. If he would view the scene, softened and subdued, he has only to cast his glance upon the blue bosom of the lake, and there, mirrored in splendid imagery, he sees the same scene, softened and subdued for the eye.

Jesus a Reflection of Purity of God

Jesus Christ is to the Father what that lake is to the mountain peaks. A reflection of His immaculate purity, power, and love, veiled in human flesh, so that we may look upon Him and live. Jesus is a reflection of the *purity of God;* from the cradle to the grave He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. Nearing the end of His human existence, He stood up in the presence of those who had known Him from His boyhood days, and issued to them the remarkable challenge: "Which of you convicteth me of sin?"—a challenge which was not met by the Pharisees of His own time, nor of any subsequent time.

Jesus is a manifestation of the *power of God.* A permanent interest attends the contemplation of power. Whether its manifestation be in the realm of matter or spirit, they alike arrest the attention and challenge interest. Power seems to be apart from mere matter, and to have kinship with life itself. It certainly is the connecting link between mind and matter, and it is the agency through which minds control matter. It is the hand by whose cunning, thought and purpose take on form in the outer world. There is a difference between *power* and *force.* Force startles and affrights us; power, directed by intelligence and love, is always pleasing to us. There is force in the thunderbolt as it cleaves the heavens, shatters the monarch of the forest, or

razes a building to the ground. There is power in that thunderbolt when, under intelligent control, it propels a boat or a railway train. Jesus Christ is *not* a manifestation of the *force* of God, but of the *power* of God.

Jesus is a manifestation of the *love of God.* He Himself says that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotton Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." The birth of Jesus Christ witnessed the flood-tide of God's love to man. When, of old, God laid the foundations of the earth, the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy. This was doubtless an expression of joy over the power and majesty of God, but when the infant of Bethlehem lay in the manger wrapped in swaddling bands, and warmed into life by the breath of oxen, then the angels of heaven came down and sang the overture to earth, "Glory to God in the highest." It was the unfolding of the great heart of God, yearning for His lost children.

Mr. Moody used to tell a beautiful story of an old mother in England, whose only daughter had gone astray and wandered down to London and was living a life of sin and shame. After trying all other means, the mother had her photograph taken and under it the legend, "My child, come home." This she had placed in some of the haunts of vice,

where the daughter saw it and was led back home by this expression of unfailing love. Jesus Christ is the photograph of the ever-loving Father crying out to sinful mortals: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Jesus Delegated His Authority

When Jesus was on earth and talked with man face to face, men were directly under His commands, and could claim His promises, but He has passed away from earth and no more rules it by His own direct authority. Just as the Father delegated His authority to the Son, so Jesus delegated His authority to the apostles. This is made very clear if we consider the teaching of His prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John. You are familiar with that chapter and I shall not quote it. In it we find the following statements:

1. God gave the Son power over all flesh.
2. This power was given that He might bestow eternal life on all men.
3. Eternal life is bestowed through the knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.
4. God gave the Son certain men out of the world, that He might teach them all that God hath given Him.
5. That all men should believe on Him through their word.

From Christ to the Apostles

We have now reached the second step in the transfer of delegated authority; namely, transfer from Jesus Christ to the apostles. In the transfer of authority from the Father to the Son there was no danger of error or mistake. The Son, being as divine as the Father, could receive without misunderstanding all that the Father communicated. But the apostles were human with all the weaknesses and imperfections that pertain to humanity, and there was danger, therefore, that they might misapprehend or misunderstand the communication which Christ made to them, because of their imperfections. It became necessary, therefore, for some power or influence to be exerted on their minds to preserve them from error and from mistakes either in taking in, or in giving out, the lessons which they received. Hence, Christ promised them the Holy Spirit, which was to guide them into all truth in the conveying of this Gospel to the world. This is made evident by a number of Scriptural passages. Christ says to His disciples:

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will *guide you into all truth:* for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he *shall hear, that* shall he speak; and he *will shew you things to come.* He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall *shew it unto you.* All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore

said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

In commenting upon this in later years, the apostle said: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Now, we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but in words which the Holy Spirit teacheth."

It is evident, therefore, that Jesus saw fit to impart the Spirit to His apostles that they might make no mistake in making known His will to the sons of men. Just as Jesus was the representative of God on earth, so the Spirit-guided apostles are the representatives of Jesus upon the earth for the purpose of making known His will to the sons of men. Their teaching is Jesus' teaching; their authority, the authority of Jesus. "He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." "As the Father hath sent me, so send I you."

When the apostles completed the revelation of the will of God in Jesus Christ, it became the perfect law of liberty to which nothing could be rightfully added; from which nothing could be rightfully

taken away. The object of the bestowal of the Paraclete and His divine guidance was to insure against mistakes in the revelation of the Gospel. That object having been attained, there is no more necessity for special illumination and guidance of the Spirit of God, and, therefore, no more special illumination by the Spirit. Men talk of being led and guided and controlled by the direct operation of the Spirit. Such men talk blindly and madly. In the history of religion fanaticism there has hardly been a single case of an infatuated or misguided man who has not made a similar claim. Likewise, the same is true of wicked and designing impostors. That man today is led by the Spirit who *is led by the truth,* and the man who walks not according to the teaching of the apostles, walks not according to the Spirit.

The man who teaches men to disobey the plain commandments of the apostles can not be guided by the same Spirit that inspired them to proclaim these commandments. The same Spirit which led an apostle to proclaim a truth, will not lead any one else to ignore or to disobey that truth. "He that hath a dream, let him tell it as a dream. He that hath my word, let him declare my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat, saith God." All attempts to add to the words of the apostles, or to subtract from them, or to substitute other teaching in the place of their teaching, is of the devil. The devil had no opportunity to corrupt the truth, as it proceeded from the Father to the Son, neither had

he an opportunity to corrupt it as it proceeded from the Son to the apostles, but *his time arrived* when the apostles proclaimed it to all mankind:

"Those by the wayside are they that hear; then cometh the devil and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved."

Three Steps in Unfolding of Divine Authority

The unfolding of divine authority in Christianity may be marked by three steps:

1. God delegated all authority to the Son.
2. The Son delegated all authority to the apostles.
3. They never delegated authority to any one else.

They are administering that authority today. Jesus told them: "In the regeneration when the Son of man shall be seated upon the throne of his glory ye shall be seated upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The regeneration spoken of is the Gospel dispensation, and the thrones of the apostles are judgment thrones. On the day of Pentecost they ascended their thrones and their first judgment was: "These men are not drunk as ye suppose, but this is that spoken of by the prophet Joel." The world's judgment "that these are full of new wine" *was wrong* and the apostles' judgment *was right.*

Their second judgment was: "This same Jesus whom ye have taken with wicked hands and slain, God hath raised up and made both Lord and Christ."

Again the world was wrong and the apostles were right. Their third judgment was to convicted sinners: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto remission of sins"—again they were right. Thus in all their sermons and writings they delivered judgments for spiritual Israel, which stand as authoritative today as when first delivered. There is nothing essential to the being or well-being of Christianity upon which they have not delivered judgments. They are ambassadors of Christ. An ambassador is one who represents all the power of his government. God is acting through them and they represent Christ. "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

Would you know God? Know Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. Would you know Christ? Know the apostles whom He hath sent. God in Christ, Christ in the apostles and the apostles in the world is the source of authority in Christianity, or there is none.

A Confirmatory Quotation

Confirmatory to the foregoing position, I produce one quotation from a full storehouse, showing the trend of modern thought. In *Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament,* the author, G. A. Jacobs, D.D., Episcopal scholar, contends for the polity of the primitive church in opposition to the pro-Papal tendencies of the Church of England. The book is worthy of a thoughtful reading. The extracts are

taken from the first chapter on "The Apostles and the Christian Church."

"The church of the apostolic period is the only church in which there is found an authority justly claiming the acknowledgment of Christian bodies in other times. And such authority is found in this church—not because it was possessed of a truer catholicity, or a purer constitution, or a more primitive antiquity than belong to succeeding ages; for neither antiquity, purity of form nor catholicity confers any right to govern or command; but because it was under the immediate rule and guidance of the apostles; and it is their infallible judgment alone, as exhibited in this church, which has a legitimate claim to our submission. Of the church of no other period can the same be said, because the apostles had no successors in their office. They stand alone. They stand alone as the divinely inspired teachers, legislators and rulers in Christ's church and kingdom. They stand alone as men appointed and commissioned by Christ Himself, and not by man" (p. 25).

"I appeal, therefore, from the Nicene Fathers to the apostles of Christ; from patristic literature to the New Testament; from ecclesiastical authorities and practices of post-apostolic centuries to the primitive church of the apostolic age. To go back to that time, and to endeavor, as far as possible, to reproduce the church of the *New Testament,* is most needful for us now, if we would preserve a faithful and

distinct acknowledgment of Christian truth amongst our people. By realizing, as far as we may, the ideal of that church in our own community, we shall best maintain its liberty and purity—we shall best meet the peculiar dangers of the present time and prepare for the future which is at hand'' (p. 29).

These are true and wholesome words, and worthy of all acceptation.

Conclusions

If what I have advanced in this paper be true—and it is—there are some conclusions that will inevitably follow, and I shall state them.

1. If I am correct as to the source of authority in Christianity, it makes Christianity wholly and absolutely a divine thing. It is not an evolution out of the nature of man, but a deliverance warm and fresh from the heart of divine philanthropy for man's acceptance. It is the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

2. This will strip Christianity of every vestige of humanism—popes and prelates, councils and creeds, with all their human officers, sacraments and observances, will fade out of the church of God.

3. This will produce the unity of Christians automatically. Wise and good men have been very busy of late in bridging the chasms, spanning the floods, tunneling the mountains, deploying the skirmishing in their endeavors to find a basis for Christian unity, forgetful of the fact that God has forestalled these

efforts by laying the foundation himself ready for them to stand upon. The restoration of the authority of Jesus Christ and of the apostles will destroy every sect in Christendom, Popedom and Heathendom.

4. It would upset the teaching of a large percentage of the sermons of the Christian ministry, *to the glory of God.* Not long ago a young man in my home town announced that he would preach the next day upon "The Divine Erasure of the Lachrymose Manifestations of Grief." A few of the old, faithful ones went out carrying their dictionaries, but a large percentage of his congregation "took to the woods." If a large percentage of the pulpit messages of the day were gathered into a pile and burned, they would give more light in their conflagration than in their delivery. I do not claim entire innocence for myself in this matter. I cry "*Peccavi*" also.

5. It would destroy the curriculum of nearly every theological seminary, divinity school and Bible college in the land. In our desire to expand our curricula we have displaced the hot plowshares of apostolic truth with cooling lotions of ontology, soteriology, teleology, eschatology, sociology, psychology, "*et id omne genus.*" In their place it would rear up schools whose classrooms would be filled with young men eager to learn the truth of God and equally eager to go out and sacrifice to proclaim it. A notable illustration of this occurred in the history of the German universities. In the

early days all the professors in theology had to affirm loyalty to the Augsburg Confession. But certain professors perjured themselves and taught contrary to that symbol. In the times of Strauss and Baur the authority of Christ and the apostles was dethroned. As a result the pupils deserted the classrooms almost entirely. Young men did not care to devote their life to a teaching that was without authority. When the great reaction came on, under Professor Christlieb and others, they returned. There was a time when Christlieb had more pupils than all the rationalistic professors in Germany. When Professor Schlatter restored the authority of Christ at Heidelberg, his classrooms were filled with students, and many of the professors in other departments attended his lectures regularly.

6. It would provide Christianity with an armor of truth against which the spears of destructive criticism would strike only to fall harmlessly at its feet. If Jesus rose from the dead and His apostles have the power He promised them, what does it matter whether Moses or some other Moses wrote the Pentateuch, whether Daniel or some other Daniel wrote the Book of Daniel, or whether one Isaiah, or two or a half dozen Isaiahs, wrote the Book of Isaiah? They may be important questions, but not essential to Christianity. They do not invalidate the authority of Christianity, if Christ rose from the dead.

7. It would tend to the speedy conversion of the

world to Christ. The history of the first three centuries demonstrates the fact that such a Chrisitanity penetrated to the darkest corners of the earth, and at the same time it marched up to the throne of the Caesars, took off the purple and the ermine from the form of heathenism and placed them upon its own shoulders. The only reason it did not conquer the world lay in the fact that its adherents began to dilute it by compromising with heathen customs and philosophy. The preaching of a sectarian gospel never has and never will convert an unbelieving world at home or abroad.

"Tho scoffers ask, Where is your gain?
And mocking say, Your work is vain,
Such scoffers die and are forgot;
Work done for God, it dieth not.

Press on: press on, nor doubt nor fear;
This cry shall ring through many a year;
What e'er may die and be forgot,
Work done for God, it dieth not."

ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY

By A. I. HOBBS

BY organization, God has most felicitously and efficiently manifested his Wisdom, Power, and Benevolence. Wisdom in designing, Power in combining, and Benevolence in directing the forces material, or physical, to the creature's good. These attributes of the Deity may be studied no less profitably in the animalscula, so infinitesimal that hundreds might find a pleasure ground on a needle's point, than in the wonderful adjustment of the myriad systems of worlds, wooed by the "sweet influences of the Pleiades."

In God's physical government, He is sole lawgiver. Every adjustment has been made by the Divine touch. The Great God is ever present with omnipotent energy, to uphold all things by the word of His power.

Is it supposable that the All-wise Disposer would delight to manifest His glory in organizing material forces, and yet would allow the moral forces of the universe to go ungirt by His power and undirected by His law? Surely not. In the moral realm we will not

look in vain for the benevolent adjustings of the Divine hand.

In pursuance of the purposes of God, our Saviour came into the world to establish an organism, that in the highest degree should show the glory of the Most High. A suitable, an infinitely wise adjustment of many parts to act unitedly as a complex whole. More fearfully and wonderfully made than the human body. More firmly cemented than any building or temple. More permanent and powerful than any earthly kingdom. Yet, resembling all these, when viewed from different standpoints. This organism, the church of the living God, was to be built upon the Everlasting Rock. Sinners, rough-hewn from the world's quarries, were to be dressed by the inimitable chiselings of the Holy Spirit, to become living stones in this spiritual house.

As we can not conceive of organizations without organs, and organs without office, so we can not conceive of office without law defining official relations and duties. Hence, *a priori,* it is absurd to suppose that the Great Head of the church has designated for His kingdom no form of government. As well might we suppose that He had organized the human body and left it without law. Indeed the very statement is irreconcilably paradoxical. When men undertake to do anything, however, of doubtful right and propriety, we naturally expect them to build upon some fallacy. Strange as it may seem, this has ever been the corner stone upon which all creed-

mongers of the past, have attempted to rear imposing ecclesiastic structures.

Perhaps some captious critic will say: The Scriptures only set forth the general form of church government as monarchical, not giving us any specific statutory directions as to the number or kinds of officers, their relations, duties, nor the manner of their selection, etc., etc. Why, herein is a strange thing, that the church is a monarchy under the unlimited authority of Christ, and yet He does not legislate for His kingdom. To whom does the right belong, or upon whom is the duty to prescribe as to the matters in hand, but the King? Or has He delegated this prerogative to any body of men now living? If so, let them present their credentials to the inspection of a world too long imposed upon by such unsupported pretensions. The admission that the general form of government is given, and that that form is monarchical, is an admission that whoever would attempt to wield any of the prerogatives of the monarch, without permission, and such permission as would be good and sufficient credentials to the world, ought to be treated as an interloper—guilty of an act, which, if performed in an earthly government would subject the perpetrator to the loss of his life. This may seem hard, but is it not true? I do not mean to say that those who do such things in the church, mean to do wrong but this does not change the nature of the act.

There is an element of truth in the objector's

mind that does not take shape in his words. It may be illustrated thus: A general orders an inferior officer to execute a certain movement against the enemy, but leaves it discretionary with him, whether he shall take one baggage wagon or one hundred. Whether he shall march by day or by night. Whether he shall ration his army from the commissariat, or live off the country. Whether he shall attack at sunrise or sunset. Now, in reference to the thing to be done, the officer has no discretion. In this, possibility is his only limit. As to the manner of executing this movement, it is always to be understood whether mentioned or not, that he shall obey the command subject to the laws of war. So the great Captain of our salvation has ordered us to "move upon the enemy's works." This we must do, restricted only by the laws regulating this warfare. The genius of the Gospel in its universality of promulgation and application, under all forms of civil government, and in all conditions of human society, demands for the subaltern in things accidental the largest liberty compatible with the dignity and majesty of its Great Author. The all-wise Head of the church, *could* have given us explicit directions for every phase of our work, but the world would scarcely contain the books. Hence, in precept, precedent, and general principle by Himself and the apostles, our Lord has given us all that pertains to the government, perpetuity and prosperity of the church.

Therefore, while in the things to be done, and also in the manner of doing some things, we have no discretion, yet amid the ever shifting surroundings of the church in all ages, countries, and conditions, there will be much of an advisory and executory character left to human wisdom and prudence, coming under the law of expediency. Still we must never trench upon the divine wisdom, by following the dictates of human wisdom, when we have the law of Christ, precept or example directing. Now must we assume to bind upon the consciences of men, to believe or do, that for which we have not a thus saith the Lord, or apostolic precedent clearly made out.

Having selected twelve men as ambassadors, to whom one more was afterward added, Christ returned to His native Heaven. Through these were sent forth His imperial edicts for the development of His kingdom on earth. A careful scrutiny of the words and deeds of the apostles, will disclose to us the law of Christ, respecting His kingdom—its government and work. For it must be remembered that the Lord promised to ratify in heaven what these men did and taught on earth.

Because these only infallible sources of information on these subjects have been ignored, various forms of church government have been foisted upon the Lord's people. These forms have been multifarious and centripetalized, or centrifugalized, as one or the other of these forces has predominated in any given age. Hence, ever-recurring and sometimes vio-

lent perturbations have marked the religious orbit. But with the Christ as the center of light and attraction, these forces will be equipoised. Then the religion of the Son of God will flood the world with His reflected glory.

Simplicity and freedom from cumbrous ecclesiastical machinery were the crowning glory and strength of primitive Christianity. Each congregation, with its own proper officers duly elected and qualified, constituted a little municipality under Christ. It was independent of other congregations, however, for municipal purposes only. Beyond these, all Christian congregations were bound together by the indissoluble bonds of love to God and man. An inter-community of interests and affection, with homogeneity in everything that made them distinctive from the world, constituted them, for the glory of God, and the conversion of the world, a consolidated power.

No sooner, however, had a scheming demagogical, worldly policy, and corrupt ambition taken control, than the church was despoiled of her simplicity, unity, purity and power. By accepting an alliance with the state she was chained as a captive Queen to the wheels of sin's triumphal chariot. Instead of standing up before the throne in her heaven born purity and majesty, tempering every department of society with her influence and virtue, she meanly consented to fall into the foul embrace of a worldly, sensual, church-state policy.

Perhaps, in nothing was the church more damaged than by replacing Christianity's original elements of power and prosperity, with the vain, ostentatious pomp, circumstance and spirit of civil government. Forgetting Christ's words: "Be not ye called Rabbi, master, for one is your master even Christ, and all ye are brethren;" "The kings of the gentiles seek to exercise lordship over them, but it shall not be so among you;" orders of clergy, correspondent to the various orders of ministers in the state must be had by the church. These must be the ecclesiastic pyramid—a monument of more folly than the pyramids of Egypt—whose apex should be the king or queen; whose base must be the common herd or plebeian's ecclesiastic. As new ideas in religion must clothe themselves in new words; for distinction, these church plebeians were called "the laity." This pyramid was perfected during the dark ages. The Roman Catholic church has the doubtful honor of rearing a higher one than any other people. Not, however, exactly in accordance with the original draft. Instead of making the king or queen the apex, as head of the state and church, the pope claimed the honor of head of the state, because he was acknowledged head of the church. This accomplished, he who blushed not to call himself "God's Viceregent on earth, His Holiness the Lord God the Pope," successfully constituted himself the fountain of temporal as well as spiritual power.

At first glance, that the world should yield to

such claims made in the name of religion, might seem to be a great victory for Christianity. From one standpoint it was, but such a victory as was religion's defeat, and would have been the ruin of the world, had not the monk of Erfurth torn apart the miter and the crown.

Episcopalianism in England attempted to rescue Christianity from the thraldom of papal tyranny. But after some abortive efforts, fell herself a victim to church-state combination. She weighed down her laity with a pyramid built after the Constantinian model.

John Wesley, wearied with the spiritual *ennui* of Episcopalianism, burst the fetters of a cold formalism. Gathering about him many admirers, he succeeded in firing them with his own electrified zeal and spiritual activity. The graveyard orderlines and beauty of Episcopalianism were about to be marred by the ploughshare of Mr. Wesley's enthusiasm. Hence, persecution was called upon to let loose the dogs of war. Mr. Wesley was still, however, a High Churchman, and indeed remained so, and died in the Church of England. He would be satisfied, therefore, if he could only find some place where the movement he had set on foot, could come to perfection under the auspices of a diluted Episcopalian regime. His eye turned anxiously to the new world. He saw a people here who had fled from regal ecclesiasticism. Whose political notions were averse to monarchy or despotism in church or

state. He found nothing favorable to reproduce here the politico-ecclesiastic polity of England. Hence, he ordered a system of church government, called Methodist Episcopacy, with Episcopalianism of England.

> In element, essentially the same,
> Made somewhat sweeter by an added name.

It must be admitted, however, to the honor of that great and good man, that he waived educational influence and training to such an extent, that he did not authorize the assumptions of power made by the bishop, who stands now at the apex of the Methodist pyramid.

Our heartiest gratitude is due to the Giver of all good that He has given us a civil government modeled to a certain extent after, and conservative of, the government of Christ's church. With the advance of republicanism and the elevation of the masses, we may expect to see the followers of Christ re-investing themselves with the rights originally given them by the Magna Charta of Christian liberty. Returning to the simplicity of primitive Christianity and doing away with clerical domination.

Then those Ashdodical terms, clergy and laity, will no longer disgrace our religious literature. I hate them in the church, as I hate the terms patrician and plebeian in the state. The former is the symbol of an unrighteous aristocracy in the church. The

latter, of the deep abasement of the masses of unofficial Christians.

The last four years (1861-1865) have been terrible years of blood. Republicanism has again passed successfully the ordeal, on the forum and on the battlefield. While her strugglings have called out the highest patriotism of Americans, and awakened the deepest sympathies of the millions of earth's oppressed, we have the strange anomaly of a majority of more than eighteen thousand Methodists in this country voting against "lay representation." Deliberately voting to be slaves to clerical domination. To be plebeians in the church. History will record this as a remarkable instance of clerical influence or "lay" folly.

May the Lord hasten the day, when all His followers will discard all castes and human distinctions in the church, and be content to stand upon a sublime equality as brethren with none but Jesus, Master.

Church Officers

At the first and during the formative period of the church, there were two classes of officers—ordinary and extraordinary. The former were subdivided into evangelists, elders or bishops and deacons. The latter, into apostles, prophets and workers of miracles. Correspondent, in number at least, to this classification were two kinds of powers—natural and supernatural. The former were subdivided into

faith, hope and love. The latter, into tongues, prophecy and knowledge.

The co-existence of these two kinds of agencies, and instrumentalities during the formative period of the church, is by no means anomalous in God's plan of operating. When the work of forming the physical universe was going on, they co-existed. When the work was completed, then the extraordinary agencies and supernatural instrumentalities ceased, but the ordinary and natural continued. So it was in forming and continuing the Mosaic polity. So, when God created man. The extraordinary and supernatural had their play until he became a living soul, then life was perpetuated by the ordinary and natural. Precisely so, in forming the church the body of Christ, it became a living soul by the extraordinary and supernatural; and it is no more natural for a man to live by inspiring the atmosphere, than for the church to live by inspirations of faith, hope and love. These are to be vitalizing elements. No more can the life of the church be sustained without them, than could the life of a man, in air exhausted of oxygen.

If the extraordinary and supernatural cease when the formative process is completed, how vain to suppose that the apostles have successors in our day. As well might one claim to be the successor of a prophet, or worker of miracles. They have no successors, nor could they have from the very nature and design of their work. God never works miracles

of knowledge or power, except in creation or in making a new revelation.

Besides, apostles were official witnesses for Christ. Can a witness have a successor? You may record and perpetuate His testimony, and it shall be true and valid for all time, but to become His successor you can not.

As, after the church had reached its majority, extraordinary agents and supernatural instrumentalities were to cease, and natural instrumentalities, as faith, hope, and love, were to abide, so should ordinary official agents, as evangelists, bishops and deacons continue.

Evangelist

From *evangelidzo,* means a proclaimer of good news. *Evangelion,* or evangel, is the good news itself. From the fact that primitive preachers, under the apostles, proclaimed the evangel of salvation through Christ, they came to be officially called evangelists. Hence, in the Scriptures and in religious literature, this word has a technical or appropriated meaning. It occurs three times in the New Testament.

Inspiration was not a *sine qua non* to the evangelist's office, and we have no reason to believe that any one, officially an evangelist, ever possessed it. Although "Philip the evangelist" did work miracles. Timothy certainly did not, for he was commanded "to study to show himself approved with God, as a

workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.'' Some Timothies of our day might profit by this advice, and save a great deal of shame, if they would study more the Word of God, and not wait for the movings of the Holy Spirit, vainly expecting that the Lord promises to none of our time. Certainly they could then divide the word of truth without so mangling it as to evoke from the world only a momentary pity for Christianity, but a permanent contempt for its professed ministers.

Paul to Timothy, II Eph. iv:5, says: ''Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of your ministry.'' Upon this we may remark, that the evangelist has to do the work *sui generis*—of its own kind.

The epistles to Timothy and Titus were directed to evangelists. Reason suggests that we should find in them the work of an evangelist described. Our expectations are not disappointed. They were to preach the word, reprove, rebuke, admonish, to set in order the things wanting, to ordain elders in the churches. In short, to become public defenders of the faith, and proclamiers of the Gospel. Their field was the world. Where ''human foot hath trod'' or human heart hath bled is the evangelist's diocese.

It is not to be understood that itineracy is a necessity to their work, but an accident. Timothy abode a long time at Ephesus. His work comprehended the establishment and setting in order of new churches, as also the teaching and enlarging of

the old ones. Indeed, we can not separate from the spirit of the evangelistic office a supervisory care over the general interests of Zion. Not that the evangelist should lord it over God's heritage, but he should care for the churches in the spirit of love, with the deep and pungent sense of his responsibility to the Great Head of the church.

That spirit now so rife which seeks to localize and monopolize the labor of the most talented preachers, thus cutting them off from all active sympathy with general interests, can not be too strongly reprobated. Especially since the supply of evangelists is so unequal to the demand. Some of our most gifted preachers are swallowed up in the circumference of a county-town locality, and can not see nor feel any interest in any general work. Hence, we seldom find them at the general missionary meetings; and when we do they are so pressed by some local affair that they can only stay long enough barely to save their credit. In the same way are general educational enterprises neglected. We shall not attempt to locate the blame for this state of things, but leave each one to take a generous share to himself. We do not object to preachers abiding, like Timothy, a long time at one place; but we do object to this selfish forgetfulness of all interests outside of a given locality, whether by preachers or people.

To one in need it may be very grateful to pour rich stores of wealth at his feet, but it would better comport with a wise Christian benevolence to share

with all the needy, since the unsearchable riches of Christ are sufficient for all.

Elders or Bishops

The former term represents the Greek *presbuteros,* which is the comparative degree of *presbus* from *presbeuo*—to be old. Hence, *presbuteros* nominally means an older or elder man. The latter represents the Greek *episkopos* from the ver*b episkopeo,* to oversee. Hence, *episkopos* is a guardian or overseer. It occurs five times in the *New Testament;* four times translated bishop, once, overseer. Its cognate *episkopee* indicates office of oversight. See I Tim. iii:1. The word *episkopee* does not of itself indicate the kind of oversight demanded of a Christian bishop, nor would the word *episkopos* indicate a bishop any more than an overseer of the poor. But the scriptural use and application of these terms does both. Acts xx:28: "Feed the flock of God over which the Holy Spirit hath made you *episkopous,* overseers." Phil. i:1. "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." I Tim. iii:2: "A bishop, *episkopon,* then must be blameless." Titus i:7: the same. I Pet. ii:27: "For ye were as sheep going astray, but now are returned to the shepherd and bishop of your souls." In all the above occurrences but one, the word *episkopos* evidently indicates an office in the congregation.

From the first passage we learn: 1. That the relation of the bishop to the congregation is analogous to that of the shepherd to the flock; only one is spiritual, the other physical. As the shepherd watches the flock to ward off the beast of prey; to lead them beside the still waters and over the green pastures; to bring back the wandering to the fold; to go in and out before them, and treat them with such tenderness that they will love his voice and follow him with cheerful alacrity; so the shepherd of the spiritual fold should smite the wolf in sheep's raiment, that comes but to "scatter, tear, and slay," and lead the flock into the rich pastures of divine truth, and beside the still waters of divine grace, and follow the lost one through the labyrinths of Satan's devices, and bear him gently back to the fold. To go in and out before them in such holiness, with such unctuous piety of heart and purity of life, and genial love for each and for all, that every one will hail his presence with delight, and be uneasy if he is out of sight.

2. We learn from this passage that the Holy Spirit constituted or ordered over one congregation a plurality of bishops—overseers—by King James' Episcopalian translation. Sectarianism, in order to sustain itself, in this place, as in some other, has dared to tamper with the utterances of the Divine Spirit. Why did not King James' revisers translate *episkopous* bishops, instead of overseers, as they did in every other place, only observing the nominal

accident, number? Does the context forbid it? O, no! what then? This is the reason: Episcopalianism must have one bishop over a plurality of congregations in order to maintain its diocesan episcopacy. But this word, translated here as in other places, would have thrown heaven's veto into the face of Episcopalianism, against its distinctive peculiarity, and in favor of a plurality of bishops over one congregation. Hence the attempt at imposition by mistranslating; whereby they would make the Apostle seem to be talking to a different class of officers from bishops. Yet, after such partisan and sectarian trifling with the Word of God, there are those who are ready to throw up their hands in affected horror, when it is proposed to revise King James' version and make it a more perfect transcript of the inspired originals. This work to be done, too, not by one religious party, but by scholars of all denominations. O, foolish one, let silence be thy best retreat, lest blatant error make thy shame appear!

From the second passage it appears, that although bishops and deacons are saints, yet saints are not necessarily bishops and deacons. Else these distinctions are meaningless. Hence, bishops and deacons were the officers of the congregation.

From the third and fourth passages, it is clearly indicated, that although the bishop is an officer in the church, yet not every disciple may aspire to the office. *e.g.* The novice is excluded.

It is assumed by some that the elder and bishop

are two grades of officers. No wonder. The ecclesiastic pyramid would not rise high enough to afford sufficient altitude to the modern bishop, or the Pope without numerous steps. Nor could there be obtained so large a view of the kingdoms of this world.

The following arguments are conclusive that they do not indicate two different grades of officers, but are two appellatives for one officer.

1. These words are used interchangeably and applied to the same officer.

Proof—Acts xx:17: "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders, *presbuterous,* of the church. Acts xx:28, addressing these elders, he said: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock of God over which the Holy Spirit hath made you, *episkopous,* overseers, or bishops. Tit. 1:5: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders, *presbuterous,* in every city." Verse 7: "For a bishop, *episkopon,* must be blameless."

In all these cases the same official is designated by the two appellatives, *presbuteros* and *episkopos,* used interchangeably.

2. The same duties that are enjoined upon elders, are enjoined upon bishops.

Proof—Acts xx:28; and I Pet. v:1-2.

3. The same qualifications are required of both. Proof—I Tim. iii; Tit. i.

Hence, we conclude they are the same officer, with

different, and interchangeable appellatives. The title *episkopos,* bishop, being applicable because of the nature of the office work. The title *presbuteros,* elder, applied, because men of advanced age and experience were usually selected to fill the office. It is not probable, however, that old age was indispensable to one's eligibility to the office. Many a Christian, comparatively young in years, is older in knowledge and Christian experience, than some with temples hoary from the frosts of life.

Qualifications

Of these there are twenty-four. Sixteen positive, eight negative.

Positive. 1. Bishop must be blameless. Not justly censurable. 2. Must be the husband of one wife. Not a polygamist. 3. Must be vigilant. 4. Must be sober. Moderate, not a hot-spur. 5. Must be of good behavior, courteous. 6. Must be hospitable. 7. Must be apt or fit to teach. 8. Must be patient. 9. Must rule his own house well. 10. Must have his children in subjection with all gravity. 11. Must be of good report among those without. 12. Must be a lover of good men. 13. Must be just, honest. 14. Must be holy, pious, religious. 15. Must be temperate. Having self-control. 16. Must hold fast the faithful word or true doctrine.

Negative. 1. Not given to wine. 2. No striker. Not quarrelsome. 3. Not a maker of money by base methods. 4. Not a brawler. Averse to contention.

5. Not covetous. Avaricious, inordinately desirous of wealth. 6. Not a novice. A neophyte or new convert. 7. Not self-willed. Haughty, imperious, arrogant. 8. Not soon angry. Not prone to anger, irascible, petulant.

Perhaps one is ready to say, much is required of a bishop. What elder shall be able to stand. Various methods have been invented to soften the lines of this picture. Some say, that if a man possess all these negative qualifications, and, but one of the positive, he is eligible to the office. That to make a complete eldership in any congregation, we ought not to expect to find these qualifications in any one man. That we ought to select a number sufficient to combine them all, taking care that each one selected shall have at least one of the positive and all the negative qualifications. That the Apostle is ascribing the office and not the officer. To my mind, this is but a genteel way of pleading an excuse for the failure, of too many of us in this age, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. It seems to me, if a man had all these negative, and but one of the positive qualifications, he would find it difficult to establish his claim to the Christian character, to say nothing of the bishopric.

The greatest obstacle in the way of many is the required aptness to teach. This, of all the requisites, should be the least alarming. If any one not a neophyte, with ordinary ability, interposes this objection to the exercising of the functions of the elder-

ship, he would tacitly confess a conscious moral unfitness, or culpable neglect to improve opportunities enjoyed. Without reformation, such a one only has a name to live while dead.

If we could divest our minds of some of the fastidious notions of this age, and return to the simplicity of the apostolic age, when Christians were more Christian and less critic; when they had quite as much head and more heart in religion, when they taught in love, and learned in meekness the simple word of our blessed Master; perhaps the required aptness to teach would not be such a lion in the way.

If the lines of this picture need to be softened, I would rather suppose that Divine Wisdom, here, as everywhere else, to put our moral on the stretch, lifts a high standard, while Divine grace stands ready to pardon our failure to reach it, upon an honest trial. Aim at the sun lest you fall below the moon, is a maxim ever to be observed, both in Christian ethics and enterprise.

Deacons

They must be grave, not double-tongued. Not given to much wine. Not makers of money by base methods. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. Must not be polygamists, but must rule their own houses well. The word *diakones* indicates a servant, but not any specific kind of service. From the objects impelling to the selection of the seven at Jerusalem, it is generally agreed, that their service

respects the temporal interests of the church. This office is no sinecure, but one of ardent work and great importance to the welfare, prosperity and influence of Christ's kingdom.

The deacons of a congregation should constitute its financial board to plan and supervise the raising of all moneys necessary for all purposes. They should look after and care for the widow and orphan, the needy, the sick, the dying, the dead. When the deaconship shall be brought up to a proper efficiency we will no more be compelled to witness the humiliating sight of Christians seeking avenues for sympathetic benevolence through the various human organizations. We may berate these organizations, and cry out that they are plucking laurels from the brow of Christianity. But if we would supercede them, we must bring up the eleemosynary department of Christianity thus doing away their necessity.

Ecclesiastic Authority

The highest church tribunal is a well ordered congregation of Christians. Under the law of Christ, such a body is the fountain of ecclesiastic authority. Every congregation is the supreme executor of the law of Christ, within its own limits. All officers spring from it and are amenable to it, as are all its members.

While teaching congregational independence, we must carefully avoid the paralyzing extreme of con-

gregational isolation and selfishness. It requires all Christians everywhere, to constitute the church of Christ in its entirety. Congregations are only the church of Christ in homogeneous subdivisions, as an army, for greater convenience and efficiency. And as the subdivisions of an army have their own camping grounds and police regulations, but are all under the control of one mind or will, for the general purposes of their organization, so all Christian congregations may have peculiar internal regulations, nevertheless, they are all under one Head, which is Christ the Lord.

There are great general movements, which from their magnitude and the inefficiency of individual effort, must be co-operative. As the missionary work, supplying destitute saints, erecting colleges, schools, etc. We have in the epistles instances of such co-operations. But these co-operations were not through packed, legislative, dictatorial, ecclesiastic bodies, who made the congregations slaves instead of themselves becoming agents to carry out their will.

As instances of congregational municipal sovereignty, we may cite the following: the excommunication of the incestuous person at Corinth. I Cor. v:4-5. The refractory person was to be disowned by the church. Matt. xviii:17: The command, "withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly," was given to the congregation. II Thess. iii:6. In II Cor. viii:19, Paul speaks of Titus and the brother who was "chosen of the congregations

to travel with us." Throughout the Scriptures the congregation is recognized as the source of authority to its evangelists, officers and agents. The act of any congregational officer or agent duly accredited, is the act of the church.

Election and Installment of Officers

Excepting the case of Matthias, we have only one case of election. The seven deacons at Jerusalem. One case, however, is amply sufficient for our direction if it clearly evolves a principle of procedure.

Acts vi:2-3: "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said: It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men, . . . whom we may appoint over this business. And they chose (elected) Stephen," etc. We learn from this—1. The original election was by the people. 2. Even the apostles did not assume the authority to make the choice, nor in any way interfere to trammel the choice of the congregation.

We have no case of bishops being elected by the people, nor by any one else. Since, then, we have one class of officers elected by the congregation, and no intimation that the rule should be changed as to the others; and, since all officers are but the agents of the congregation, and amenable to them, we are forced to the conclusion that none has a right to assume official prerogatives, but by their consent. This conclusion is not to be doubted in the light of

church history, for that confirms it with great particularity.

Election to, not identical with induction into office. By some the reverse of this is contended for. That any one elected to an office is *ipso facto* invested with all its powers. That election is ordination. This position is usually taken by those opposed to imposition of hands in the ordination ceremony. Their opposition to the ordination ceremony arises more from an untempered aversion to the papistic claims usually made when hands are imposed, rather than from an achromatic conviction of the impropriety or wrongfulness of the ceremony itself. In this, as in everything else, "to the law and the testimony." Acts vi tells us the people *(eklego),* chose the seven, and the apostles were to *(kathisteemi),* appoint them over the business of serving tables. Tit. i:5: Titus was commanded to *(kathisteemi)* ordain or appoint elders in every city.

In Acts vi, the same word is used to indicate the appointment of the "seven" by the apostles, as is used to tell Titus what to do in respect to elders. While a different word, *eklego,* to elect, indicates the part the people took in the matter. *Kathisteemi* means to place over, or to install. Inasmuch as the apostles were to do this after the election by the disciples, we conclude: 1. That an election is not ordination. 2. That in the Scriptural order it is the antecedent, and ordination the subsequent. 3. That ordination is a formal induction into office.

Titus was to ordain, that is, by this precedent, to set over the churches as elders those previously elected by the disciples. Now, if to ordain is simply to elect as some contend, then the congregations have no voice in the selection of officers. For Titus, not the disciples, was commanded to ordain. This position transfers to the preachers the whole business of making officers. It augments clerical power insupportably, which, is the very thing those who confound election and ordination wish to prevent.

What was the Ordination Ceremony? The seven deacons were ordained by imposition of hands, fasting, and prayer. Barnabas and Paul ordained (*cheirotoneo* by stretching forth the hand), with fasting and prayer. Barnabas and Paul were set apart to the work of evangelism, by imposition of hands, fasting, and prayer. Acts xiii:3. Timothy had the hands of the *presbuterion,* eldership, imposed upon him, the presumption is, with fasting and prayer, to constitute him an evangelist.

How, then, was Titus to ordain? Evidently, after the people had made their choice, if the choice did not conflict with the organic law of the kingdom, he was to commission or install into office the persons chosen, by imposition of hands, fasting, and prayer. This is our model.

Who may conduct the Ordination Ceremony? The official relation in the church, as in the state, is based upon an expressed or implied covenant. The electors offer the elect certain prerogatives and

honors, with their cordial support in his onerous work, if he will enter upon and faithfully discharge the duties of a given office. He accepts the terms of the covenant. Now it becomes necessary to let the parties appear together and formally ratify the covenant. If the Lord had not given us a form of ratification, we might lay our wisdom and prudence under contribution for an appropriate form. We might adopt the ancient form of passing a furnace and burning lamp between the sundered parts of a slain animal; or build a covenant pillar of stones. But the Lord has saved us this trouble by giving us a form of ratification most beautiful and impressive.

As it has been the custom from time immemorial to impose hands upon the head, as when a blessing was pronounced, or something was transferred from one to another, as in the sin-offering. And, as in this covenant, authority to act officially is to be given the officer elect; what more fitting than that hands should be imposed amid the solemnities of fasting and prayer. He only is competent, therefore, to impose hands, whom the congregation permit. They will usually permit the bishop or evangelist.

Men may scoff and say, all this is but a form. Be it so. The Lord has ordained it; and wisely, too, for such a form, all radiant with divine philosophy and fitness, is needed to impress officers with the immense responsibilities assumed, and the disciples with their acknowledged obligations—Aaron and

Hur alike—to stay the hands of their official agents, that Israel may prevail.

FAITH DOES NOT DISPENSE WITH LAW*

By JOHN C. MILLER†

"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Romans iii:31.

THE meanings of the three terms, law, faith and grace, as used by Paul, are not especially difficult to understand. Wrong conceptions of their use, however, have given rise to false teaching on the subject of salvation from sin. Paul writes in Romans iii:20—"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Also, in Romans vi:14—"For ye are not under the law but under grace." Some conclude from these assertions that, because the Jewish law as such was abolished, nothing contained in it, not even its moral element, is of any force. Others conclude that *grace* is opposed to all law, and that a Christian is wholly released from all law of every kind; that he must be entirely controlled by spirit impulses, which he is to woo for himself by means of prayer alone; that, if

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he does anything else, he is in danger of legalism; that confession and baptism cannot enter into a man's justification because they are works, and that, if he in any way depends on them, he relies on his own works. This is all wrong, and Paul is careful to tell us that he does not make law void by faith but establishes it more firmly. Let us look at our condition somewhat broadly and see how true this declaration is found to be.

1. Physical law must be observed by us, or we suffer the penalty of every transgression. To walk by faith releases no man from the consequences of transgressions in the physical kingdom. A few cases might be introduced where in the days of miracles the introduction of a new force changed the direction of physical laws and brought out a different result, but those times are gone, and we do not expect them more. (a) One's ignorance does not save him. One walks in the dark to the edge of a precipice and falls over. One takes what he supposes to be quinine but which is arsenic. No honesty will prevent the fatal results. (b) One's negligence will not fail to make him suffer. A man lives in a house with defective flues. He prays at night and in a spiritual sense God hears his prayers, and yet he himself and his family may be homeless before sunrise. One leaves a cistern full of water with a few loose boards over it. Will faith keep children from falling in? (c) God will not save men by His providence from the common accidents of life. One starts by railroad.

Will faith keep him when the train at fifty miles an hour strikes another, or bounds from a bridge, or strikes a broken rail? He has not faith at all unless he complies with all the laws of safety.

2. Faith does not release anyone from the requirements of moral law. It is most preëminently of the great law of right and wrong that Paul wrote in our text (Romans iii:31). The ten commandments were not exhaustive of moral duties. They sufficed for a nation in state of pupilage; but under Christ we have the code not only spread out in ample form, but applied even to the thoughts of men. Faith demands a perfect conformity to all its requirements. Let anyone attempt before a Bible-reading community, and see if he can make right wrong and wrong right. Let him engage in whisky-selling or set up a gambling shop and see if he can escape the consequences. Let a man commit theft or murder and see if the crime does not come up sooner or later for retribution. What we call a *seared conscience* is nothing more than a faculty suppressed till it ceases activity. But, like dethroned reason or memory worn out by old age, it will surely spring into renewed activity in the eternal world. The Gospel does not release us from a single moral duty enjoined by the law of Moses, but makes these known far more fully and enjoins them more imperatively than the Mosaic law ever did.

3. Faith releases no one from political law. It was no doubt the construction put on grace and jus-

tification by faith that caused Peter and Paul to speak in terms so plain on this subject. False teachers claimed that, being under the influence of the spirit, wicked rulers had no right to prescribe duties to them, and that they could set all such at defiance. See what Paul said in Romans xiii:1-6; what Peter said in I Peter ii:13, 14. (a) For a plain infraction of such law let a man come before a court of justice and plead ignorance of the law. Every citizen in this land can know the law, and it is his duty to learn its provisions. (b) Let one commit a real crime and come before a court of proper jurisdiction and see if he will be acquitted. Crime is *crime*, and intentions cannot make it otherwise. If the deed be done by accident, then it is not the deed of the person at all. If it be done in a frenzy of passion, this more or less takes from it the nature of crime as not the deed of the man.

4. We are strictly under the reign of financial or commercial law. Let men in this hemisphere plant their corn in September or sow their wheat in June and see what kind of crops they would raise. When the supply is always too great, let men increase it tenfold and see if the necessary result can be avoided. Let a merchant start his ships across the ocean just at the season of hurricanes and see if his goods and ships do not go to the bottom. Let him neglect ocean and air currents and see if he does not suffer in his financial interests. Let one make debts and live extravagantly with no income and see if he does not

soon come to bankruptcy. Faith releases us from no law under which we naturally come by our birth into this world. We were never under the law of Moses. It was abolished nearly two thousand years before we were born. The Jews of Paul's day had been under the Mosaic Law, and faith or the Gospel released them from it. This is all the law, under which God ever placed men, that faith ever released them from; and the reason is *this* really *accomplishes* what the Law of Moses only *shadowed forth.*

5. The Gospel, or faith, or law of faith (Romans iii:27) is the last and highest exhibition of law God ever gave to men. No man can now be released from its demands. 1st. Why does it take precedence over Moses's law? It does in fact what Moses's law only served to type out. The Jews sinned as we do. For these sins they were to bring victims and offer them as expiations for sins. These were below men and could not take away sin, but the Gospel sacrifice can. 2nd. Why is the Gospel called grace? Because it is all given without man's agency. Priest, altar, victim the most costly—all these were of God in the Gospel. Under the old dispensation man made his altar, reared his victim, slew it and offered it himself. If it could have taken away sin, all was not man's deeds. This system is called faith because it demands confidence in what God has prepared and assures us an efficacious sacrifice. Law was the very proper title of the old system, because it had no mercy but was typical, and to enjoy that those who

offered must furnish their own altar, furnish their own victim, and offer themselves. No one can fail to see the reason for that title at this point. 3d. The law of faith is God's direction by which He admits us to, and helps us within, touch of that glorious sacrifice which alone can release us from the stains we incur in the violations of these laws which have no mercy. Faith is the first great direction and without which nothing would be of any avail, and hence the law is called that of faith. Repentance, confession, baptism complete the process of bringing us to Christ. The remainder is made up of the few religious activities and a holy life. 4th. Consider the danger of neglecting this law of faith. The sacrifice of Christ is the only remedy for sinning mortals, to raise them above the realm of sin, and this law of faith is the only way of getting to him. If ignorance, honesty, and good intentions were all insufficient to save men from the ruin that resulted from violating other laws, will any of them save us from the ruin of neglecting this? They will not. Listen to this: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For, if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Hebrews ii:1-3. And to this: "For if we sin willfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacri-

fice for sins.'' Hebrews x:26. It is God's ultimate word to mortals. It is the proclamation of his remedy for the infraction of all other law. This law offers us a panacea for all ills. If we accept it, salvation eternal will be ours, and if we reject or even neglect it, ruin eternal will follow. Come *now,* while its rich provisions are offered you, and do not dream that grace means neglect or disobedience. This is the most stern demand God ever made on mortals. You perish at the threshold if you slight it. In other realms you may live for a time in defiance of law; but in this you die at the outset.

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